NAFTA: The View from Mexico

COMMONWEAL

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Flea-ing
New York

BRUCE W.
BURTON
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debatable?
Yes.
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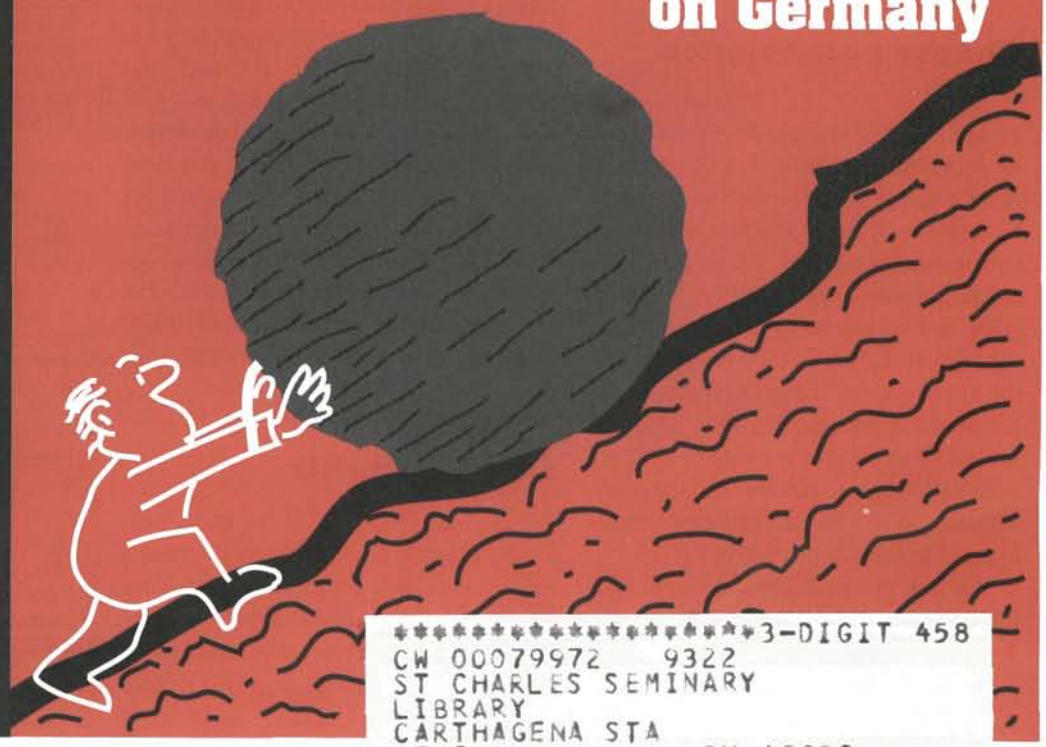

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CORRESPONDENCE

No doubt about 'Didymus'

Salem, Oreg.

To the Editors: Your piece on W.H. Auden's brief tenure as "Didymus" at *Commonweal* maintains that "the personal origins and meaning of Auden's use of Didymus as a pen name remain obscure." No doubt Auden's personal reasons for choosing the name are deep and shrouded with poetic mystery, but the plain meaning of "Didymus" is "the twin"; it is the koiné Greek equivalent to the name "Thomas," as in "doubting Thomas." Recalling this may help us better understand Auden's words as you reprinted them, especially his determination not to be a Christian who says, "I go to church every Sunday. What it all means, I can safely leave to the theologians."

If Thomas was the disciple with whom doubting modern (as opposed to "postmodern") people could best identify, we could be well on our way toward understanding even Auden's personal reasons for presenting himself to *Commonweal* readers as "Didymus."

(REV.) ROBERT J. ELDER

The writer is pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Salem.

Choose nonviolence

Columbus, Ohio

To the Editors: We are deeply disturbed by your repeated editorial position that, if no alternative is viable, then arms should be sent to the Bosnian Muslims so that they can defend themselves. While there are a number of wrongs and injustices involved, what is fundamentally wrong with the carnage in Bosnia is the violence itself, the use of human beings as means, and to recommend that the Bosnian Muslims should be enabled to respond to violence with violence is to recommend that they, too, should use human beings as means and not as ends in themselves.

We find this position to be contradictory and inconsistent with Christ's actions and his teachings. We are saddened that a Catholic Christian publication would accept the principle of expedience rather than arguing for the alternative that Christians must believe is viable, and that alternative is nonviolence.

It is interesting that in your issue of March 26, the editorial recommending that arms might be sent as a last resort ["No Right Choice"] is followed by a signed column ["Overcome Evil by Good"] concerning this alternative of nonviolence. There, Eileen Egan and Alain Richard's observations and recommendations were particularly responsive to the situation in Bosnia, and we wish that your editorial might have taken notice of them and at least considered this alternative rather than relegating it to a separate article.

MICHAEL MANLEY

The writer is secretary of the Pax Christi branch in Columbus.

The editors reply:

Just-war thinking in the Catholic tradition leaves ample room for self-defense, which argument lies behind our editorials urging that the arms embargo be lifted for the Bosnian government. Mr. Manley ought also to consider the argument that the level of violence has reached such barbaric levels in Bosnia-Herzegovina precisely because its citizens (Muslims, Croats, and Serbs) never had a credible defense, first against Serbia (which inherited the Yugoslav army and its weapons), and now against Croatia, which was never subject to the economic sanctions and an arms embargo. The policy in question is called deterrence. It too has its drawbacks, but sometimes it has encouraged nonviolent resolutions to potentially violent confrontations.

Death benefits

Houston, Tex.

To the Editors: Daniel Callahan's observations on death ["Cramming for Your Finals," July 16] are on target and helpful. Even though an understanding of death that leaves out transcendence (an understanding Callahan does not yet accept) will always be human tragedy, we should take up his challenge to seek a cultural rapprochement with death, since there are today fewer believers in religious transcendence. I would add these considerations:

Without death, our lives would be banal, forcing us into nothing serious, deep, important, requiring commitment; we would instead be able to grant ourselves an interminable postponing of freedom and responsibility. Death gives an edge to our lives.

And more. Death is the seal that solidifies what we have become in life by our free concrete actions, good, bad, indifferent. What values have we lived by? What causes have we served? To whom and to what have we given ourselves? As Daniel Callahan suggests, what we have done with our lives receives its perfection and finality in death.

Lastly, the mere prolongation of physical life gives it no meaning. Meaning rises out of those peak moments when we choose in freedom to live out of conscience in the face of great adversity, to

(Continued on page 29)

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COMMONWEAL

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On the road

The Israeli-Palestinian agreements for mutual recognition and a measure of Palestinian self-rule bring to mind the final lines of the ancient prayer of Zechariah: "guide our feet into the way of peace." For the Israelis and Palestinians are embarked on an arduous journey, a long-term peace process. More than a series of discrete events that begins with a treaty signing and that ends with the relinquishment of contested territory, the Israelis and Palestinians must face up to all of the resentments, justifications, and claims created over decades of struggle in which thousands were killed and maimed and in which history was rewritten to suit political needs. It is still a very small stretch of territory which will be filled with anger and resentment for a long time to come.

The agreement reached under deep cover in Oslo between Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Mahmoud Abbas of the PLO and signed under the approving eye of the president and two former presidents of the United States has the air of a done deal. Scrutiny of the accords and speculation about motives and outcomes disclose not only the daring of the agreement, but the precariousness of the process the Israelis and Palestinians have embraced.

The daring was celebrated in Washington on September 13 before a world still slightly astonished at this turn in what had seemed an intractable and interminable struggle. The precariousness is still before us.

Yasir Arafat and the PLO, having lost their Soviet sponsors and their various Arab bankrolls, were becoming superfluous representatives of the desperate inhabitants of Gaza and the West Bank. At the same time, Hamas, the Islamic religious group, has emerged to play an increasingly militant role as advocate and enforcer in the occupied territories. Given Arafat's waning influence, goes the argument, he had little choice but to strike a deal now with Israel. Ergo, the agreement is only as solid as Arafat's ability to deliver on self-rule and economic improvement in the territories. He must control dissident elements within the PLO and its splinter groups, which over the years have proved even more fractious than Israeli political parties. And finally, he must wring aid from Arabs and other governments as well as from a strapped United States. For large numbers of Israelis and American supporters of Israel, his chances of success on all these fronts do not look all that solid.

But, absent progress toward peace, are Israel's prospects any better? It has seen its own future and prosperity diminished under the growing economic, political, and psychological constraints that come with being on constant military alert. In 1991, the Bush administration, using aid as leverage to force an end to new settlements in the West Bank, can only have reminded the Israelis that the clock and the meter were ticking down on U.S. subventions. And President Bill Clinton, by

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his studied distance from the ongoing Middle East negotiations in Washington, must have made it abundantly clear to the Israelis that he was not investing his meager supply of political capital on the outcome. No more than Arafat and the PLO can the Israeli government guarantee that dissidents, and the West Bank settlers in particular, will not work to subvert the agreements, perhaps even turning to violence and a civil war to maintain their turf in what will soon become Palestinian-controlled territory and ultimately part of a Palestinian state.

This catalogue of pros and cons only emphasizes the larger point: the peace process is a high-risk venture for both Israelis and Palestinians. And though Israel will always have an overwhelming military advantage should the agreement break down, there will be no return in the eyes of the world to the political *status quo ante*. Unquestionably, the nay-sayers in each camp can conjure dire scenarios: in one, Israel is ultimately and fatally threatened by a full-fledged and fully armed Palestinian state; in the other, Palestine remains a rump state unable to govern itself or to achieve economic viability. The doubters think all moments are inauspicious for putting their feet on the path of peace. But if not now, when?

There is no time like the present to begin the long and arduous effort to finally build trust and establish confidence between two peoples whose energies, respect for learning, and oddly similar political experiences could make at last an oasis of democracy and prosperity in the Middle East.

ET CETERA

A PEN NAME IS MIGHTIER THAN A PISTOL In his just-published biography of longtime *Commonweal* Managing Editor George N. Shuster (*On the Side of Truth*, University of Notre Dame Press), Thomas E. Blant, C.S.C., discloses that in the early years Shuster sometimes signed *Commonweal* articles with assumed names to conceal how much in the magazine was his own work. In one of these, bylined "Paul Crowley," Shuster ridiculed a recent stance of Senator Thomas Heflin of Alabama.

"About two weeks later," the book reports, "a letter arrived from Senator Heflin at the *Commonweal* office addressed to Paul Crowley and challenging him to a duel over the remarks he had made. Shuster answered the senator and informed him that unfortunately Mr. Crowley had just left the United States for a tour of Pakistan. The senator wrote a couple of letters further, inquiring about Crowley's eventual return, and Shuster eventually apologized that he had lost contact with Mr. Crowley altogether...."

CORRECTION

Freud describes the *unheimlich* (the uncanny) as experiencing something as both strange and yet eerily familiar at the same time. Father Kenan Osborne may have felt *unheimlich* when he read the last paragraph of my review of his *Ministry* (Paulist Press) in the September 10, 1993, issue. It was strange because it didn't quite seem to fit. It was familiar because it contained his very own words. What I had included as a quote from Osborne's text suitable for highlighting got tacked onto the end of the review. Those eloquent words were not my own

DENNIS M. DOYLE

We hope Dennis Doyle and Kenan Osborne will accept our apologies. The Editors

NOTEBOOK

FLEA-ING NEW YORK

CITY OF INEXPLICABLE ERUCTATIONS

The last week in August was unbearably hot and humid in New York. This seemed to have a predictable effect on the citizenry; at least it had a predictable effect on me. Sleep was difficult to manage. I'd wake up an hour or more before dawn, listen to the slow grinding noise of the fan, and be unable to fall back asleep. I resorted to reading a book on the failed promise of Vatican II, but even this venerable narcoleptic didn't do the trick. That's how hot it was. One particularly brutal night I killed what I took to be a gnat, or worse a flea, as it limped across the rather thin tuft of hair on my chest. Naturally, I soon imagined myself infested, every twitch of hair on my legs a new beachhead upon which to battle the marauding vermin. I looked toward the window and all the pigeon droppings piled up on the ledge outside. I got up and went out for coffee.

In the colder months the vagrants who sleep on the benches along Broadway's median strip are usually concealed under sheets or blankets, so at dawn it sometimes looks as though the shrouded figures of the dead have been lined up as in a Matthew Brady Civil War photograph. But on this August morning the dress code was more relaxed, and nearly every bench was occupied by some prostrate and sockless casualty. At 96th and Broadway, the man who usually proffers his paper cup to those entering the CitiBank branch was compulsively sweeping the sidewalk like a distraught burgher hurrying to open shop. Where, I wondered, did he get what was obviously a new broom?

The week was punctuated by such doleful incongruities. I couldn't walk but a few blocks without being badgered by a derelict, scoffed at or taunted by some contemptuous drinkers on a stoop or in a doorway. Did they know about the flea, I wondered. One short and very scruffy panhandler latched on to me for two whole blocks, conducting his interrogation in a hoarse stage whisper. "What is the wealthiest country in the

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world?" he demanded to know over and over again. "Sorry," I said, "I have nothing today." He finally fell away only to affix himself immediately to one of Xanadu's more prosperous looking citizens walking in the opposite direction. "What is the wealthiest country in the world?" I heard him begin.

On the subway a barefoot man in remarkably filthy clothes besieged us with the usual petition. "I'm homeless. I need something to eat," he announced. This was innocuous enough until he suddenly burst out laughing like a practiced extra in a horror film. More disconcerting, he would stumble a few feet and repeat the whole routine, including the maniacal laugh. On another train, an anxious young man reached into the plastic bag he was carrying and took out a can of insecticide or insect repellent and sent people scurrying as he sprayed himself from head to toe. (How did he know about my flea?) He finished with a flourish by piling up rings of white foam on his thickly matted hair as though he were demonstrating the luxuriousness of a shampoo in a TV commercial.

At another station a man was being led away in handcuffs by two undercover policemen. Maybe I had missed whatever excitement surrounded the arrest, but I was struck by how matter-of-fact everyone on the subway platform seemed. And it struck me as even stranger that one of the policemen was at least a head shorter than the handcuffed man, who himself was not tall.

My week seemed to culminate in two other incidents. It is an unspoken rule that you do not meet a stranger's eyes in New York. This is a sensible precaution, and I usually observe it. However, turning down one relatively quiet street I encountered a reasonably well-dressed young man staring at me in what I took to be a plaintive way. Hesitantly, I asked him if he needed directions. He lifted a brown paper bag concealing a bottle, took a swig, narrowed his eyes, and burped at me. It was, I must report, a menacing burp. Had I been justly rebuked? But for what?

The next day I was hurrying down another of the narrow little streets that crisscross lower Manhattan when I came upon a crowd of fifty or more people gawking at some sort of violent confrontation. Three black women, one with a baby in her arms, were gesturing wildly at an Oriental man. A white policeman on a motor scooter had placed himself in the middle of this mounting drama. When the Asian man offered some sort of explanation to the cop, one of the women screamed even louder, pointing belligerently at the man. She was forcibly shouted down by the policeman. In the distance you could hear the sirens of police cars caught in traffic on their way to the scene.

The quality of public life in New York can be as oppressive as a humid August heat wave. During my week of travail, Errol Flynn was starring in *Captain Blood* and *The Sea Hawk*, both playing at the Thalia, a recently reopened revival house at 95th Street. I, too, longed to unfurl my sails for the Caribbean in pursuit of "heavily laden" Spanish galleons, not to mention the more ship-shape Olivia de Havilland. The Caribbean, I understand, is not the wealthiest place in the world. And it's definitely not as hot as New York in August. PAUL BAUMANN

THE VIEW FROM MEXICO

NAFTA SOUTH OF THE BORDER

HIGH STAKES, BIG HOPES, REAL FEARS

There is an old Mexican saying: "Poor Mexico, so far from God and so close to the United States." For many in Mexico today, this has never seemed more true and foreboding, as the North American Free Trade Agreement, NAFTA, moves toward its January 1 ratification deadline in the U.S. Congress. While U.S. press coverage has concentrated, as always, on what's at stake for the United States—the fear of lost jobs, environmental degradation, increased migration, and import surges—the question of what NAFTA means for Mexico has hardly arisen north of the Rio Grande.

This indifference is nothing new. The United States seized over half of Mexico's territory more than a century ago, and since then, it seems to Mexicans, we have tried to buy what we didn't take. While slow to understand Mexico's problems with poverty, we're quick to exploit its wealth through direct and indirect investment or, when necessary, invasion. We're often both patronizing and heavy-handed in trying to dictate Mexico's domestic and foreign policy, lecturing sanctimoniously on its corruption, its responsibility for our drug problem, how it should vote in the United Nations, what price it should set for its oil, what role it should play in the third world. Our ignorance, prejudice, and arrogance are reflected in the way we refer to Mexican immigrants as "illegal aliens," when most of them are migrating to lands we took from them.

It doesn't surprise Mexicans that the U.S. Congress, special interest groups, and the public debate whether NAFTA is "good" for us but remain selectively ignorant of NAFTA's importance for Mexico. But NAFTA's fate, either way, will have

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far-reaching implications for Mexico's economic and political stability, particularly for President Carlos Salinas de Gortari and his ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI).

Salinas, who must soon choose his successor, has staked the PRI's legitimacy and survival on NAFTA's success. In a sense, NAFTA was born when Salinas sold George Bush on Mexico's inclusion in the 1988 U.S.-Canadian trade accord. Believing that economic reform is the key to democratization and social reform, Salinas aggressively dismantled Mexico's statist and protectionist policies. Attacking Mexico's crippling inflation, rising unemployment, and enormous foreign debt, Salinas privatized government businesses, earning over half a billion dollars, while cutting state subsidies and government spending, transforming critical sectors of banking, finance, and agriculture, and opening Mexico to foreign investment. Amid cries of "selling out," he oversaw a dramatic rise of investor confidence as capital poured into Mexico. The economy flourished, reversing the 1980s' legacy of stagflation. Salinas restructured the debt, reduced inflation, and, with tariff reduction, Mexicans went on a spending spree. Salinas preached a vision of Mexico that included it within one giant hemispheric trading bloc with 360 million consumers and a vital part of the world's largest, richest market. NAFTA would be Mexico's ticket out of the third world.

For Salinas, the maneuvering has been tricky, and critics abound. Although the PRI has won every presidential election for sixty years, Salinas's election in 1988 was the closest ever, and many still question whether he really won. Certainly, there was widespread voter fraud, and Salinas's opponent, Cuauhtemoc Cardenas, has already declared himself a candidate for the July 1994 elections. Much of Cardenas's appeal derives from his father, Lazaro Cardenas, Mexico's most popular modern president (1934-1940), still perceived as a Washington, Lincoln, and FDR rolled into one. Salinas seems intent on undermining Cardenas's legacy. It was Lazaro Cardenas who championed Mexican agrarian reform, which Salinas undid; Cardenas stood for Mexican sovereignty, which Salinas seems to be compromising; and, most importantly, Cardenas nationalized Mexico's oil, something many Mexicans fear Salinas will bargain away.

"Thanks for dropping in, Harry. May the free market forces be with you."

These fears are well founded. Underlying every favorable discussion of NAFTA in the United States is the ultimate goal of "getting to" Mexico's oil. Cuauhtemoc Cardenas's candidacy, along with the opposition of a number of splinter parties, maverick politicians, and intellectuals, provides a steady chorus of condemnation over the price Salinas is willing to pay to join NAFTA. As long as Mexico's economy seems healthy and NAFTA on course, their criticisms have been muted and Salinas has remained popular. But now it's "showtime." Salinas is gambling that NAFTA will pass, his hand-picked successor will triumph, and in his mid-forties, he will emerge as the country's power broker for decades to come.

Salinas received a major setback in July when a U.S. federal judge ordered the government to provide an environmental impact statement on the proposed agreement. A breakthrough came in mid-August, however, as the United States, Mexico, and Canada announced the successful negotiation of contentious side agreements to NAFTA designed to preserve the environment and protect workers' rights. These agreements would establish a new fact-finding commission and impose trade sanctions or fines if any of the three countries fails to enforce its labor or environmental laws. Although there will be a fight among the Democrats, approval in the U.S. for a Clintonized NAFTA now seems likely. After all, it's the only Clinton policy with major Republican support.

But no matter which way NAFTA goes, it means problems for Salinas and the PRI. Three are critical. If the United States is afraid of losing its jobs, Mexico is sensitive to NAFTA's cost to its sovereignty and national identity. What will be the political fallout should Mexico be swept up in a wave of buying in the United States that not only increases its balance-of-payment deficit, but forces a devaluation of the peso, furthering domination by U.S. capital, and the loss of self-determination, real or perceived?

Related to this is the problem of rising expectations. In Mexico NAFTA has been a constant focus of speculation and debate for over four years. In the midst of a continuing world recession, Salinas sold his policies and NAFTA as Mexico's "way out": NAFTA would "miraculously" jump-start the economy, providing jobs, raising wages, increasing both selection and consumption of goods. Such expectations are extremely high, especially where a full third of the population is under fifteen.

Finally, there is the problem of how NAFTA will actually work. Even with the supplemental agreements there are questions about where the estimated $7-10 billion to finance a massive cleanup along the U.S.-Mexico border will come from. While the World Bank seems poised to grant loans, many fear these provisions will be ignored in an investment and development frenzy following approval. Furthermore, who will enforce the provisions? The Spanish colonial bureaucratic credo of "do little and do it slowly" clearly clashes with the U.S. chant, "just do it." This could lead to continual U.S. criticism of Mexico and further attempts to meddle in its internal affairs.

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As NAFTA moves into the home stretch, so does the Mexican political system. The PRI's control of Mexico, Salinas's place in history, and his continuing role in the party all hinge on NAFTA's success. But even if NAFTA passes, a new Mexican president and the old party will still have to deal with its implementation and rising expectations. Here danger lingers. Neither Mexico, Salinas, nor the PRI can risk appearing "fooled" by the Yankees, but NAFTA will require at least fifteen years of restructuring and adjustment within Mexico, not all of which will fit the glorious "win-win" scenario promised by its proponents. A national identity crisis and a backlash of Mexican nationalism are real possibilities, should the "Colossus of the North" too conspicuously engulf Mexico.

Pride in "Mexicanidad" has always been essential to shaping and maintaining Mexico's cohesiveness and political stability. Should NAFTA fail to produce jobs, better wages, and more consumer goods for Mexicans, Mexico could revert to protectionism, statism, and nationalism. Thus, where expectations meet reality will determine Mexico's future. And in so doing, our future as well. WILLIAM K. MEYERS

William K. Meyers is associate professor of history at Wake Forest University.

TO TAME THE DEFECIT

WHEN TO CRY 'UNCLE'

THE LINE-ITEM VETO

Envision a line-item veto with real fiscal teeth that is not a threat to the traditional balance of powers between the White House and the Congress. Such a veto, created by constitutional amendment and crafted to preserve our historical democratic traditions, can readily be modeled on the benign aspects of receivership practices used to resuscitate troubled businesses.

The mounting fiscal crisis faced by the republic as we close out the century can likely be solved only by serious fiscal restraints. These are not apt to arise within the Congress. By the nature of things, Congress's current political equation results in, *de facto*, a "beggar-thy-grandchildren" fiscal policy that threatens to drown the economic future of coming generations in unpaid bills.

Congresspersons cannot be expected heroically to resist demands for more submarines, AIDS research, farm subsidies, or Medicare expansions. On the contrary, such legislators can inevitably be expected to collaborate in logrolling through Congress the yearly tidal wave of constituent-gratifying appropriations.

Under the present equation, only the office of president can be expected, if only sporadically, to take a more transcendent view of the nation's welfare. Only the president, as the single office-holder with a nationwide mandate, can be expected to focus as a trustee should, not merely on immediate constituent needs as defined by a wide spectrum of interest groups, but on the nation as a constituent. Only the president will view, at least sometimes, the national good in terms of the longterm welfare of our posterity as a constituency—the as yet unborn generations of our citizenry.

Envision a constitutional amendment that permitted the president to be the nation's fiscal fiduciary during short periods of financial crisis. The special veto power would enable the president to eliminate any item in any new spending measure or any item in any prior enactment. Such a potent fiscal veto would be subject to the usual two-thirds override by congressional vote. Such a veto power—parallel to the notion of emergency powers in usage for hundreds of years in the Roman Republic before Caesar—would be limited in time. The arrival of a defined crisis would trigger the veto power and the end of the crisis, or the end of the current fiscal year, whichever came later, would mark its expiration. "Fiscal crisis" would be defined in the amendment by a simple formula, readily applied. No permanent displacements would occur in the normal balance of powers between Congress and the Executive.

The formula would be easy to compute. Whenever the total of all interest paid on U.S. Government indebtedness of all kinds exceeded a fixed percentage of GDP (say, 3.5 percent), then the president's line-item veto power would kick in. (Currently, according to Department of Commerce data, GDP is running at about $5.7 trillion while interest on the debt is about $200 billion per year, hence 3.5 percent.)

But whose numbers should be trusted in determining GDP and the percentage of interest being paid on the debt? After all, smoke, mirrors, and accounting gamesmanship are commonplace at budget time in D.C. As part of the amendment I would recommend that the Department of Commerce's accounting and reporting practices, as used for the *fiscal year ended October 1992*, be adopted. If the baseline data are derived from accounting practices used in a fixed, past year, any future manipulation of the data would be minimized. Moreover, if the numbers are generated under the auspices of a cabinet officer, then the Senate will have ample opportunity during confirmation hearings to exact assurances concerning the consistency of the accounting practices to be employed.

In the event that Congress voted to challenge Commerce's reporting, the amendment would also contain a grant of jurisdiction to the Supreme Court to immediately hear and decide the case, determining it on the sole issue of whether the accounting procedures used by Commerce were proper.

Please note that no violence is done to the traditional separation of powers. If Congress does not want the president to enjoy this type of fiscal veto in the first instance, then Congress can demonstrate the discipline needed to avoid it. And in the second instance, any fiscal veto can be reversed by a two-thirds vote of both houses. The Supreme Court continues in its traditional role as referee of the Constitution, and the chief executive receives no permanent enhancement of power that at his will he might do mischief with.

In a fashion, the process envisioned is very like a voluntary

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national receivership. The president, acting in a fiduciary role, like the receiver of a troubled business enterprise, has extraordinary but short-lived fiscal powers.

It is far better that any future receiver of a besieged American fisc be a self-imposed one, an elected president exercising constitutionally mandated authority, than the designees of some cabal of bankers and other creditors from Tokyo, Bern, and Berlin.

BRUCE W. BURTON

Bruce W. Burton is professor of law at South Texas College of Law in Houston, Texas.

WORLD WATCH

J. Bryan Hehir

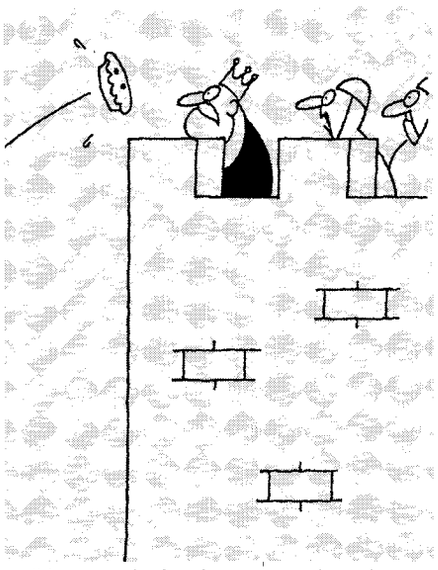
THE AGE OF RESTRAINT

FOUR CASES

The Cold War is over, but the threat and use of force are pervasive in the world today. That is the conclusion one could draw, with the vivid images to support it, from a survey of the summer's news. From the heart of Europe to the Horn of Africa the use of force is pursued with primitive methods but devastating consequences for the civilian population. From the Korean peninsula to South Asia and former Soviet republics the threat of nuclear proliferation provides a striking contrast to the low-tech warfare pursued within states. The cold war forced policymakers to think in terms of a single massive threat with cosmic consequences if deterrence failed. The post-cold war world has generated a multiplicity of threats, which defy a single strategy and promise not catastrophic damage, but chaos within nations which can spill over to international conflict.

Inevitably, given its role in world politics, the United States is confronted with choices of engagement, passivity, or mediation in most of the situations of contemporary conflict. The post-cold war era does offer new opportunities to plan for and to move toward international cooperation, but it also requires sustained thought and disciplined policy regarding the use of force. The purpose is not to multiply ideas for using U.S. muscle, but to draw clear lines regarding the extreme cases when force may be the only way to avoid aggression and to determine how it may be used with the greatest restraint.

The emphasis on restraint is doubly needed today, because the discipline imposed on both super powers by the threat of total war—a discipline which yielded restraint often if not all the time—is now gone. Four examples of U.S. policy choices this summer illustrate that identifying the moral and political logic of restraint requires more effort and attention. When restraint is not imposed from outside, the policy choices become more complicated, politically and ethically.



"Apparently they have no qualms about using nonconventional weapons!"

The first case which illustrates the point was the bombing of Iraq in response to an intelligence finding that Saddam Hussein sought to assassinate former President George Bush. The Clinton administration conducted a scrupulous review of the accusation that Iraqi intelligence agents were implicated in the plot; the president resisted calls to take action—including political accusations that he was too timid to use force—before finally deciding to bomb Iraqi intelligence headquarters in Baghdad. When he ordered the attack, using twenty-three Tomahawk missiles, Mr. Clinton was supported by Democrats and Republicans and by the general public, as expressed in polling data. Washington columnist Jim Hoagland expressed the prevailing opinion when he endorsed the attack, and noted that the targeting of the intelligence headquarters—a home for both torture and treachery—was particularly appropriate and proportionate (eight civilians were killed in the neighborhood).

In spite of the near universal support, the methodical decision making, and the high-tech precision of the Tomahawks, my argument here is that the attack failed the criterion of restraint on both just-cause and just-means grounds. On the face of it, just cause would seem to be present: The Iraqi plan to kill Bush sustains the justified reputation of Saddam Hussein as an international criminal, indicted both on human-rights grounds at home and by policies of aggression abroad. There are clearly multiple "just causes" for coordinated international action against the Iraqi regime; but just cause for military attack must be determined in light of what Professor James Childress has called the "original question" about the use of force. Since this question is whether *any* use of force can *ever* be justified, it yields the presumption against all use of force as the starting point for thinking about invoking military means. Every resort to force must not only identify a just cause, but one

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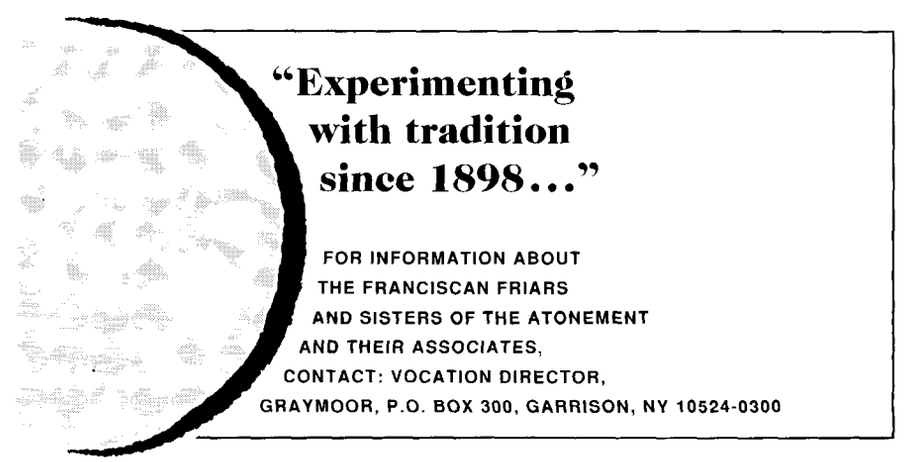
which can surmount the presumption against force as the way to resolve political conflict. This column was used to support retaliation by the United States against the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Resisting aggression across internationally recognized borders meets the test of overriding the presumption against the use of force. The attempt on Bush's life—heinous as it was—is not the same kind of threat to international peace and order. It constituted just cause for multiple forms of response, but not enough to rebut the presumption against military action.

Moreover, in contrast to Mr. Hoagland, I find the intelligence headquarters the wrong target for the attack, not because *any* case could be made for the immunity of the Iraqi agents, but because of the urban location of the building. Admittedly, eight civilian lives are low "collateral damage," but an air strike whose purpose was to hurt and deter Iraqi policymakers, could have struck valuable military targets outside Baghdad. Precision guided weapons should not be used as reasons to risk civilian casualties unless a target is absolutely necessary. Even if one agreed with the just-cause grounds for the attack on Iraq, no particular target had such high priority that civilian centers should have been put in danger. Those who justify (ethically) *some* use of force, need to be scrupulously restrictive in preventing *most* uses of force. Attacking Iraq this time failed the tests of restraint.

Second, President Clinton's declaratory policy regarding North Korea this summer also failed the canon of restraint. Here again, there is much to admire in the Clinton administration's focus on preventing proliferation of nuclear and chemical weapons and ballistic missiles. Counter-proliferation policy is a fundamental requirement for the post-cold war world. Hence, there was a need for a strong statement of U.S. intent to deter the North Korean determination to cross the nuclear threshold. The problem was not the fact that the president threatened the Koreans, but how he did it. The press quoted Mr. Clinton seeking to dissuade North Korean efforts to build nuclear weapons by saying "if they ever use them it would be the end of their country." The threat has no limits. One factor in the discipline of deterrence which the cold war imposed was the strenuous effort to mount a credible deterrent which also could meet the test of not attacking civilian populations as a target. The Clinton threat to North Korea lacks the distinction which all moralists and many strategists sought to impose on nuclear deterrence from the 1950s through the 1980s. Today, deterrence is both less cosmic and more complex than the task of deterring a Soviet attack on the United States. Successful deterrence of proliferation requires a strategy designed for more discreet threats but for a multiplicity of actors. The challenge today is to redesign deterrence; in doing so we should not forget the lessons of distinction and restraint learned over forty years. Mr. Clinton's rhetoric in Korea sounded as if key principles were forgotten.

The third instance of U.S. policy which the dynamics of a post-cold war world calls into question is conventional arms sales. Here again, restraint is not a distinguishing characteristic. A Congressional Research Service study in July indicated that the U.S. share of the conventional arms market increased from 49 percent in 1991 to 57 percent in 1992. In the high politics of the cold war, with the nuclear issues looming dominant, little attention was paid to conventional arms sales. But they are preeminently an issue today. The cold-war rationale for arms sales was always less than satisfying, but it supplied a certain strategic rationale for at least some of the sales. Today the strategic rationale has been stripped away from most of the policy. The policy today is driven, as the study notes, by "the U.S. arms industry's need to find new overseas markets in an era of shrinking defense budgets." *Some* arms sales may still have a political-moral rationale; but *most* of the 57 percent the U.S. generates do not fit that rationale. A U.S. policy which seeks to counter proliferation of weapons of mass destruction cannot credibly coexist with a policy pushing conventional arms for purely economic purposes. Restraint, again, must be self-imposed. Thus far it has not been.

The fourth case of post-cold war politics is, of course, Bosnia. In the face of three complaints about lack of restraint, does U.S. policy in Bosnia fail because of too much restraint? Just cause here is certified; the presumption against force is easily overridden on cause grounds. Legitimate authority is readily identifiable (UN, EC, even NATO with UN authorization). The tough calls have always been proportionality and possibility of success. Neither can be reasonably assured; both have kept me and others from urging the use of force. The paradox of September 1993 is that it seems absolutely clear that *only* force will restrain the Serbs and Croatians, particularly if one seeks to reclaim Muslim territories. Serbian policy has been so blatantly contemptuous of international norms and opinion, and so wantonly aggressive that I would support a "lift and strike" policy by NATO (lift the arms embargo and strike Serbian forces around Sarajevo) if any kind of European consensus would sustain the policy. Short of that, successful prosecution of the policy will fall victim to European criticism and consequent lack of U.S. domestic support. In retrospect, many of us in the United States may well be accused of too much restraint. In September of 1993, however, I don't see a viable policy of using force effectively. □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OF SEVERAL MINDS Liz Leibold McCloskey

BUZZ WORDS OR PRINCIPLES?

ETHICS & HEALTH-CARE REFORM

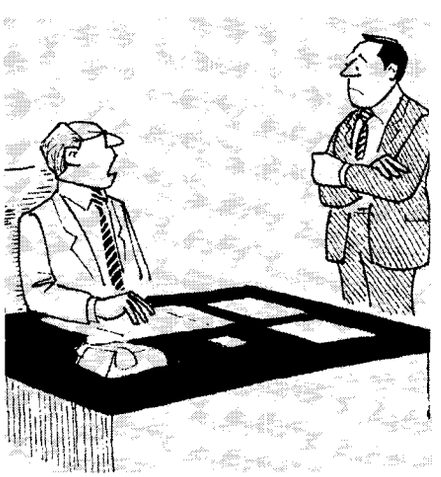
In June 1990, when I was lining up the witness list for a Senate Finance Committee hearing on the Patient Self-Determination Act, a prominent medical ethicist declined to testify for fear of having his views distorted and manipulated by the political process. The bill, which became law that fall and which required medical facilities to distribute information about living wills and durable powers of attorney, was the first piece of federal legislation to deal explicitly with end-of-life decision making—a major ethical issue. Yet this respected ethicist expressed skepticism about the capacity of a political forum, such as a congressional hearing, to capture adequately the nuances and complexities of the issue. Only two years out of divinity school and convinced of the political relevance of ethics, I argued with him that ethicists have a responsibility to engage in the public dialogue about health-care issues to ensure that the human and ethical dimensions be addressed along with economic factors.

Three years later, watching the national health-care debate, I think this bioethicist may have made a salient point about the relationship between ethics and politics.

As the Clinton administration begins to unveil its plan for our ailing system, the feasibility of marrying ethics and politics remains an open question. Of the four hundred or so members of the President's Task Force on National Health Reform, a small number were engaged in the discussion of ethical matters. Although the ethics group did not convene until many of the other "clusters" and "subgroups" were well underway, one of its tasks was to articulate the principles underlying the effort to reform health care. Thus, the parameters of the new health-care system were set before the ethics group ever met, and participants in groups constructing basic aspects of the plan said they had little or no exposure at all to the "ethics people." In one sense, that isolation might have been positive because each group was free to function without outside pressures. But then, we have to ask, what contribution did the ethics group make? And what relevance did its deliberations have in the formation of the Clinton health-care policy?

There is no question that in the realm of health-care reform, critical ethical choices must be made. One of the most politically difficult—medical rationing—wasn't even touched. In the view of an aide to Hillary Rodham Clinton, the administration needs to prove its credibility in containing overall health-care costs before even discussing whether some forms of medical care are worth the limited benefits they provide. And although Mrs. Clinton's aide was under the impression that the ethics task force made thoughtful contributions and recommendations with respect to end-of-life decision making, participants in the ethics task force said these were not the kinds of issues they discussed. Even the volatile issue of including abortion in the basic benefits package was not on the group's agenda.

But as two participants admitted, they were under no illusions that their work was in any way intended to form the ethical foundation of the new system or that policy choices to be made turned on ethical considerations. Rather, their work would be used as justification for the plan. Thus, consultants working on the basic benefits package, the structure of the purchasing cooperatives, and other central components of the system, were not waiting for the ethics group to conclude their deliberations.



"This is a political *problem—let's not drag* ethics *into it."*

The ethics group did, however, articulate a broad range of principles that should motivate any new health-care system, and these contributions have apparently helped the Clintons frame a philosophical approach to the complex issue of health-care reform. When it comes time to sell the health-care program, the rhetoric will most likely be gleaned from the values and principles articulated by the ethics task force. The preamble to the bill will be loaded with words such as security, choice, quality, access, and efficiency that signal valued principles. A trial balloon raised by the administration in August used many of these buzz words.

Nonetheless, the ethics participants hope that as the program is put forward, their contribution will not only be part of a public relations campaign, but will also be used as a standard by which to measure the ultimate product. Arthur Caplan, who led the "values framework" subgroup of the ethics cluster, says he would be happy to see the health-care reform plan sold in terms of certain ethical standards, and told Ira Magaziner, head of the task force, as much. Caplan believes that these standards would serve to hold the plan accountable.

But remembering the words of my reluctant witness of three years ago, I worry that participation of the ethicists gives the appearance that the plan has an ethical stamp of approval, though none of the hard ethical questions has been addressed. Of course, these are not easy questions nor is the relationship between ethical deliberations and practical policy outcomes clear-cut. But it seems to me that the professional ethicists have missed the opportunity—a rare one—of contributing to the public debate without being used by the process. □

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WHAT'S A CATHOLIC COUNTRY TO DO?

THE CHURCH'S TEMPTATION IN POLAND

TIMOTHY A. BYRNES

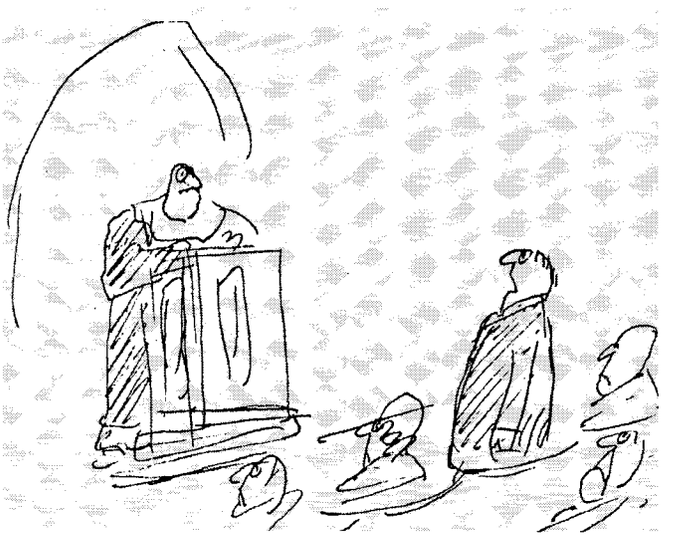
What role ought the Roman Catholic church play in a democratic Poland? Of all the perplexing questions facing Poles, perhaps none resonates more deeply in Polish history and culture than this one. After decades, indeed centuries, of opposition to a variety of external forces, the church is asserting a powerful role in setting not only the moral tone of an independent Poland but its social policy as well. The church has sought the reintroduction of religious education in public schools; it has tried to eliminate access to legal abortion; and it has maintained that Polish popular culture (particularly TV and radio) should reflect the "Christian values" of the vast majority of the Polish population.

Not surprisingly, each of these initiatives has generated controversy. Substantial elements of Polish society, particularly among the intelligentsia and professional classes, have resisted what they perceive to be the powerful political role of Cardinal Josef Glemp, the primate, and the rest of the Polish episcopate. Taken together these controversies have raised critical questions about church-state relations in Poland, questions that the church hoped would disappear with the Communist past.

On the surface, much of this seems familiar to an American observer. The issues, the rhetoric, and the political divisions correspond roughly to our own "politics of religion" in the United States. In the United States, as in Poland, religious leaders strive to "return God to the public schools," to restrict access to abortion, and to infuse popular culture (TV sitcoms, movies, magazine racks) with Christian values. And yet, to state the obvious, circumstances in Poland are vastly different from what they are in the United States. For one thing, Polish religious life is the opposite of America's religious Tower of Babel. Well over 90 percent of Poles are at least nominally members of the Roman Catholic church, and no one could fail to be impressed with the huge crowds that flock to Mass each and every Sunday. Many Poles, for cultural and political reasons, resist the description of their country—"Catholic nation"—but in purely demographic terms that is not far from the truth.

More important than the demographics is the role that the Catholic church has played throughout Polish history. From the birth of the Polish nation, marked by the baptism of Mieszko I in 966, to the long decades of Communist rule, the church has often symbolized both Polish nationalism and opposition to the ruling regime. Mass attendance and personal identification with the Catholic faith have been political as well as religious acts during these periods.

In recent decades the church came nearly to embody national aspirations, and now that those aspirations have forged a truly sovereign Poland, the church is not content with symbolic gestures and mere cultural leadership. It wants a real say in the political, social, and moral life of the country. Indeed, it seeks the concrete application of Catholic moral doctrine to Polish law. Some elements in the church have gone so far as to argue that opponents of the church's moral/political initiatives are insidiously "un-Polish." Defenders of legal abortion, for example, are dismissed as secularists, nostalgic for Communist policies



"Can't you give us the roots of a little bit of evil, rather than the roots of all *evil?"*

TIMOTHY A. BYRNES, *who teaches political science at Colgate University, is the author of* Catholic Bishops in American Politics *(Princeton University Press). He spent the Spring 1993 semester as a Fulbright Scholar in Poland.*

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that were designed to destroy the country's moral fiber. Opponents of state-mandated "Christian values" are accused of carrying on outdated policies that banned the church from the mass media.

With divisions on these questions growing ever wider, politicians, scholars, and members of the media have been focusing a great deal of attention on the crafting of the new Polish constitution. This arduous task might well take years to complete, but regardless of the timetable, the constitutional treatment of church-state relations will not resolve the current problems or bridge the political and social chasms that have appeared. For one thing, the current constitutional proposal is a model of ambiguity. While declaring that the Republic of Poland is "a lay state," the proposed constitution also makes clear that this state will "cooperate" with the Roman Catholic church in order to "meet the needs" of its citizens. But even were this ambiguity to be resolved, the constitution would not settle the matter of religion and politics in Poland.

As the American experience shows, constitutions do not, by themselves, determine specific political realities. The U.S. Constitution provides that Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, and the last fifty years of Supreme Court decisions have erected the so-called wall of separation between church and state. Despite this wall, indeed perhaps because of it, religion and politics (as distinct from church and state) in the United States continue to interact in both benign and aggressive ways. Religious leaders speak out on a wide range of public policy issues; religious interest groups compete for access to politicians, policy makers, and regulators; and public officials ritually display their reverence for America's Christian (or Judeo-Christian) values and traditions.

In Poland, as in the United States, the relationship between religion and politics will be forged in political battle rather than constitutional convention. And, for the moment at least, the church in Poland is asserting itself with substantial success. Religious education has returned to the public schools; abortion has been sharply restricted; divorce has become more difficult to obtain; and pursuant to a church-sponsored law, a commission has been empowered to monitor TV and radio to ensure their conformity to Poland's Christian values. Having emerged from the defeat of communism as the most organized and coherent institution in the country, the church has wasted no time translating its strengths into tangible influence in the parliament, the president's palace, and perhaps the voting booth.

Of course, this does not mean that the church's political position is assured over the long run. In fact, viewed in dynamic political terms, rather than static constitutional ones, the church's position may be more tenuous than it appears. Church-supported policies, for example, may prove, in the long run, to be unpopular. Take the issue of abortion as an example.

For nearly forty years abortion was the leading form of birth control in a country where sex education was nearly nonexistent and where reliable contraceptives were not always available. Today, with no educational preparation and no assurance that effective contraceptives will become more widely available, the Polish parliament passed a law last year banning abortion except in cases of rape or incest or where the life or health of the mother was at risk. Given the strict manner in which these exceptions are being enforced, legal abortion has been very sharply curtailed in Poland. This development portends a major change in the lives of millions of Polish families, a change that is widely (and accurately) attributed to the church's political clout. Given that opinion polls indicate that two-thirds of Poles favor continued access to abortion, and that hospital emergency rooms report rising rates of "botched abortions," the church's influence on abortion policy and its resolute opposition to artificial birth control could lead to a political backlash. That backlash would not be directed so much at the church itself, but rather at the public officials who voted the church's views into law. A state-supported imposition of Catholic censorship of the mass media could produce a similar reaction. In short, Catholicism and Catholic moral teachings may prove to be more popular as rallying points for dissent than as guides to the foundations of a democratic state.

One of the most interesting aspects of the current situation in Poland is the degree to which the matter of the church's political power will be determined not through private negotiation between prelate and party (as it was under the Communists), but through democratic processes—campaigning, voting, and forming parliamentary coalitions. In the wake of communism's fall, the church has clearly and vigorously asserted its vision of the proper relationship between the "Polish national heritage" (Catholicism) and Polish law. That vision has, to a considerable degree, passed into the statute books. But this month, the citizens of Poland will have a chance, in the voting booth, to express their views regarding these developments. If the voters endorse the church's vision, if they support parties and candidates who have done the church's bidding in the political arena, then their decision must command respect.

If, on the other hand, voters express a desire to move in a more pluralist or secular direction, then the church will face a new and very formidable challenge. It would be placed in the awkward position of opposing the democratically expressed will of the people it claims to represent. At the moment, given the general lack of institutionalized opposition to the church's influence, this scenario seems unlikely. The election is being fought over economic rather than moral issues, and few of the church initiatives are in danger of being overturned in the short run. But Poland is undergoing tremendous change at virtually all levels of society and all predictions must be cautious ones. No one can be sure where these changes will lead, but they may lead West, in the direction of consumerism, secularization, and pluralism. In that case, sovereignty and democracy may turn out to be more durable and more deeply rooted obstacles to the church's influence than either nazism or communism were.

We need to be careful, however, not to slip away from a discussion of religion and politics and back to one of church and state. The church in Poland may not carve out a privileged con-

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stitutional status for itself. And it may not succeed in electing parliaments and governments that are anxious or even willing to legislate Catholic teachings. But that does not mean that the church could not continue to play a central role in Polish society and indeed in Polish politics. The Catholic hierarchies of Spain and Ireland, to name two examples, have suffered (if that is the right word) the loss of privileged status and have also been challenged to define their political roles in new ways, in terms of their access to individual Catholics rather than their influence on the state. Indeed, the American hierarchy has been arguing in Rome for over two centuries that the separation of church and state is actually a good thing because it frees the church from potentially crippling alliances with narrow and essentially ephemeral political forces. The American church asserts itself in a myriad of ways, of course, but it focuses much of its energy on persuading Catholics and non-Catholics through education, preaching, and various forms of lobbying.

This is a lesson that the Polish episcopate may have to learn in the coming years. Influence can be defined in many ways in a democratic system, and often the hardest dilemma for any religious institution to resolve is balancing accommodation to pluralism with faithfulness to a moral and religious tradition. The response that the Polish church gives to this dilemma may define its role for decades. For Cardinal Glemp and the rest of the Polish episcopate, this dilemma may be the unavoidable price of establishing a truly sovereign and free Poland. □

GROWING UP OR SELLING OUT?

CZECHS FACE THE FUTURE

TIM McCARTHY

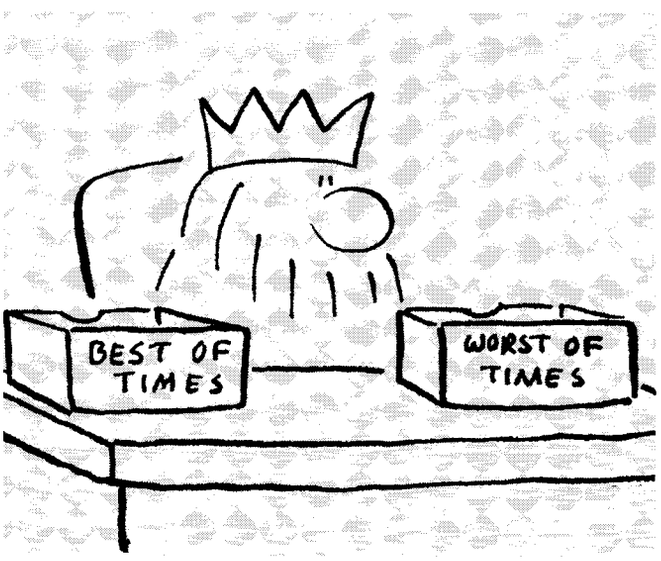
She got pregnant in Prague about the time of the Velvet Revolution. Those were careless days in November and December 1989, breathless, drawn with danger. Nobody slept much. Every day around midnight they waited in the cold outside the *Magika Laterna* theater to hear what the Civic Forum leaders had decided to do next. Everything was up for grabs. Some would say four years later that it still is.

They were married the next spring, when words like "marriage" and "children" were still blossoming with a promise the young Czechs had not known in several decades. Daughter of Communists old enough still to believe in socialist ideals, she wore a crucifix hidden beneath her clothing for much of her pregnancy. Late in her term, her husband flipped it free at lunch one day. The three of us stared at it exposed on its string against her chest. She blushed to the bone.

They were not Christians. My look shot a question toward them. Her husband shrugged. "Everything is so uncertain for the baby," he said. "Why take chances?" "I do believe there is *something*," she said. But she was still blushing as though surprised in an unworthy act. Both the blush and the belief in *something* said a great deal about where many Central Europeans still find themselves.

More than forty years ago Hannah Arendt wrote in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* that one day totalitarianism would "simply disappear, leaving no other trace in the history of mankind than exhausted peoples, economic and social chaos, a political vacuum and a spiritual *tabula rasa*." That is remarkably close to what happened, especially in Czechoslovakia.

In August 1968, the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia crushed more than a bid for a political reform. Tank tracks chewed into the spiritual landscape as well. An exhausted people turned inward, hunched its shoulders against the dead weight of oppression. Many who had yearned for freedom and truth settled for a new car and a cottage in the country. Generally, only those with little to lose (or to gain) dared to be seen in church.



TIM McCARTHY *is a free-lance journalist. He was on assignment in Central Europe for the* National Catholic Reporter *in 1990.*

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A few hundred dissidents, artists, and intellectuals, Vaclav Havel prominent among them, shunned exile and pressed on in their opposition to the regime. Apart from that, most people lapsed into apathy and ennui, worked the system for what they could get without getting into trouble. Even so, state socialism had its compensations. Not the least of them was a generous amount of leisure time. Everyone had a job, but too many cooks for the economic soup left a lot of people working part-time for full-time pay. Czechs hiked, camped, skied, biked, and partied with a vengeance. Theaters (where it was a little easier to disguise mildly subversive material from dimwitted censors) sold out a year in advance.

People had time to become friends, hedge the meaner realities of oppression with casual communities they could count on. Before the '89 revolution, I had fallen in with such a bunch in Prague. There were about thirty-five of them, late twenties to early middle age, carpenters, journalists, TV producers, filmmakers, printers, truck drivers, models, computer technicians, and a professional chef. No one had much money (you could make more peddling newspapers than you could as a medical doctor), but always they made do. They bicycled into the mountains, chipped in for festive meals, drank all night, sang Czech lyrics set to American folk tunes, indulged their theatrical flair with costumed weekends in storybook castles, slept on the floor, repaired their own cars, all with grace and good humor, wit, wonder, and a run of children underfoot.

It seemed real—at its best a witness to truth against that tortured lie communism had become—and, yet by the winter of 1992, hardly more than two years after the revolution, all of this was gone. Western ways had set in. Everyone was scrambling for a living, overworked and worried, with no time to spare. The group no longer met. A few had grown rich. One truck driver now owned a small fleet, had an international business and three gold chains for his neck. No one saw him much. Whatever envy some felt was far more passing than their regret.

Another of the old crowd was being divorced, devastated about losing his wife to a newborn entrepreneur, afraid he would lose his apartment, too, because apartments at less than London rates were almost impossible to find and it was still uncertain who owned what. He was leaving his job; prices had exploded; government TV hardly paid a producer enough to survive.

Once devoted journalists, following the money, jumped into advertising, often with American-owned firms. Americans were overrunning Prague. That, at any rate, was the local perception. "We have exchanged one occupier for another," one journalist lamented. Suddenly there was an underlying air of anger, bitterness, disillusionment, and distrust. When their ironic sense of humor fails them, Czechs can be a melancholy lot.

Now that they were free to read whatever they wanted, many Czechs stopped reading anything but the new blaze of tabloids, and looked at the plethora of pornography. Theater seats went begging while some of America's worst movies were sold out.

Politicians old and new, from free-marketeers to "converted" Communists, writers to rock musicians, scrambled to fill the political vacuum Hannah Arendt had predicted. The Civic Forum disintegrated, polarized between hard-nosed capitalists and more traditional humanists still holding out for the promise of a "third way" between socialism and free-market shock therapy. The big winners were the unbridled capitalists and a clutch of ex-Communists. In 1992 shock-therapy zealot Vaclav Klaus became the Czech prime minister, while Slovaks elected Vladimir Meciar, nationalist demagogue, an economic "go-slow" advocate, and former Communist thug. The two of them, refusing to call the national referendum they knew would defeat them, proceeded to negotiate an end to the seventy-four-year-old union between Czechs and Slovaks.

Klaus had been finance minister in the first postrevolution government of another ex-Communist, Marian Colfa. No one could accuse the aristocratic Klaus of having been a Communist. His economic reforms had pushed unemployment in Slovakia, with its antiquated heavy industry, from near zero to about 12 percent. Like so many of those who have been carrying Milton Friedman's colors across Central Europe, Klaus, who drove a BMW while colleagues were still riding in Soviet clunkers, has never had to suffer the everyday effects of his own economic shock therapy.

Even at that, privatization in what is now the Czech Republic has been slow. No one quite knows how to go about it. The result is a kind of quiet economic chaos. Only look at the tribulations of the U.S.-based Kmart corporation.

Kmart jumped in early, buying thirteen government-owned department stores in the Czech lands and Slovakia. After the January 1 split, the corporation finds itself with stores in two countries, unable to ship merchandise from one region to the other without paying a value-added tax. Sources close to Kmart's Michigan headquarters revealed that, even before the split, operations in Czechoslovakia were not going well. Czech and Slovak managers snubbed their American counterparts. Renovations are under way to Americanize the stores, but what do you do with all that extra help (850 in one store alone), and all that inefficiency (wait in one line to buy something, a second to pay for it, and a third to pick up what you bought)?

Corporate conflicts aside, most of the local born-again entrepreneurs profiting from privatization are ex-Communists, former party functionaries who were about the only ones who knew the system and had any (usually ill-gotten) capital to invest. Public resentment simmered. What sort of revolution was this, when so many of the old guard, state socialists turned capitalists, Stalinists turned democrats, wormed their way back to the top, sloughing their pasts like snake skins?

Against warnings from President Václav Havel and others not to "become like them" (referring to the political witch hunts of the old regime), parliament in 1991 passed a lustration law designed to cleanse state employment rolls of anyone who had collaborated with the Communist government, especially the secret police (StB). Havel, probably with a wistful glance back to the purer days of political dissidence, eventually signed the

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lustration bill.

Trouble is, more names than almost anyone might have imagined had found their way into the StB files as informers. Sometimes the collaboration was an outright fiction created to make some StB agent look good, but at this distance it is hard to sort it all out. Havel had long ago written that Stalinist oppression endured because the people, even those who openly opposed it, helped create the monster that devoured them, and the StB files, blatant injustices notwithstanding, provided troubling evidence of that. Many believe that the deepest impulse of the lustration campaign was a reaction against that complacency, an appeasement of collective guilt. It was, in any case, a negative attempt to fill the spiritual *tabula rasa* Arendt foresaw.

Given the political, economic, and social turmoil, what else was there? The church in Czechoslovakia played nothing like the vital role of the Polish church, or of the Protestants in East Germany, in opposing Stalinist oppression. And it still is not offering any compelling alternative, especially to the generation that came of age after 1968.

Drawn though they might be toward spiritual alternatives, many Czechs do not trust the church. Some still have not forgiven it for its betrayal and execution of religious reformer Jan Hus in 1415, whose monument dominates Prague's Old Town Square and is one of the city's most popular warm-weather gathering places. Others believe that all the Catholic church really wants is to regain the property and power it held in the years before the Communists took most of it away.

More evidence of that possibility has surfaced in Slovakia than in the Czech lands (Slovakia is about 60 percent Catholic;

Slovakia embraces the past

The Catholic church in what is now Slovakia has historically been associated with the suppression of liberty. Monsignor Jozef Tiso's attempt to create a theocratic Nazi puppet state in 1939 ultimately failed and the church fell easy prey to the Communist revolution in 1948. After forty years of Communist indoctrination, the perception of the church as reactionary would have been hard to erase; instead it is now being reinforced.

The majority of Catholics who clung to their religion in postwar Czechoslovakia regarded their church primarily as a refuge and remained psychologically in a pre-Vatican II time warp. Most priests were selected by state officials for their mediocrity and were trained by theological nonentities; the best theologians, after years in prison, were restricted to the underground. Now in the post-Communist society it is essentially the same mediocrities running the church. They are proving incapable of responding to the challenges of a pluralist society or delegating to the laity.

Scared by the inrush of Western materialism, Western sects, and Western theology, today the Slovak church appears to be trying to turn the clock back and insulate Catholics from what it regards as contamination. "We must bar our doors to the West"—Slovak archbishop, Cardinal Jan Sokol's dictum—is supported by many Catholics genuinely distressed by the corruption of values in the West. Catholic seminaries in Slovakia, long starved of theology, have rejected gifts of libraries from German Catholic faculties for fear of heresy. But most Slovaks I met, including people who are not radicals, rate the church's attitude as mistaken if not disastrous.

In Slovakia, where the hierarchy is particularly conservative, I heard disturbing reports about the toll regimentation and suppression of intellectual freedom are having on the mental health of seminarians. According to dissident priest Anton Shrolec, they are "under close observation, controlled by each other, just as they were under the Communists."

Prolonged wrangling over property, in both Slovakia and the Czech Republic, has soured relations between government and church, and has lowered the perception of the church in public opinion. In Slovakia, the church was also party to an ill-judged law ordering the return to the Greek Catholics of all their churches awarded to the Orthodox by the Communists in 1950. As a result, Orthodox congregations in almost totally Orthodox villages have had to surrender their churches.

In overemphasizing Slovak national identity, the hierarchy shares responsibility with Vladimir Meciar's government for the breakup of Czechoslovakia. The Slovak underground church was 10,000 strong but because of its lack of participation in political dissidence—Charter 77 was mainly Czech—it produced what Shrolec terms "young semi-theologians, incredibly naive, unable to distinguish between religion and politics." The Slovak hierarchy and Christian political parties look back to Tiso as a role model and seem to want to recreate his theocracy in a materialist, socially disoriented, post-Communist society. Thus, the Catholic church in Slovakia, despite its high profile and the enthusiasm on which it can still draw, is now the least trusted institution in the country.

In the Czech Republic even a vibrant, renewed church, would find the gulf between the average Czech and the 40 percent who belong to the church hard to bridge. In Slovakia, where less than half a century ago most people were still peasants and 60 percent are still nominally Catholic, the extent of the church's marginalization and identification with nationalism should give the hierarchy pause.

JANICE BROUN

Janice Broun writes frequently on Eastern Europe and the Balkans for Commonweal. *She recently visited the Czech and Slovak Republics.*

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the Czech Republic, 40 percent). The church in Slovakia has been frozen in the fifties. I interviewed the Jesuit, Jan Korec, shortly after the revolution. The doorbell at his Bratislava apartment still flashed a table lamp instead of ringing, so that spying neighbors would not know he had visitors. His sacrifices under totalitarianism were deep and impressive. Yet even Korec (now a cardinal), like most of the Slovak bishops, has turned out to be an ardent nationalist. The church in Slovakia has even tried to resurrect the Nazi collaborator Monsignor Jozef Tiso as some sort of Slovak national hero. Given that kind of example, it is no wonder that many Slovak Catholics are disillusioned, and even more Czechs, with their predominately humanistic bent, are less than inspired by a Christian alternative.

I remember my friend's bone-deep blush when her hidden crucifix was exposed. Today her baby is a toddler. She and her husband want nothing more than to emigrate and raise their daughter outside the environmental and moral contamination they now see little chance of righting in their lifetime. These are bright, committed people. Where would the country be without the likes of them?

Many now believe that the Czech revolution has not really happened, and that when the real one does come it will be wrapped in a cloth far coarser than velvet. However that may be, what happens as the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe struggle for political and economic order, social integrity, and spiritual renewal could be crucial for all of us, a way out of our own environmental and moral contamination. □

LIVING WHERE THE WALL WAS

WHAT STILL DIVIDES THE GERMANS

STEPHEN BROCKMANN

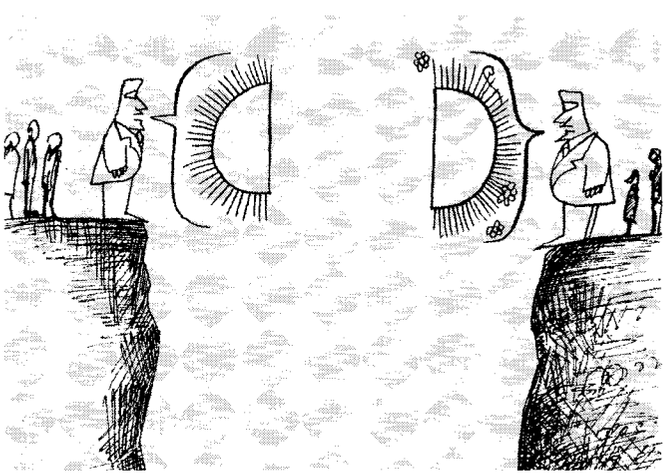
As the divided capital of a divided country, Berlin was for four decades the front line of the cold war. The opening of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989, marked both the culmination and the end of a powerful symbolic order that governed our world for half a century. In images transmitted immediately around the world, Berliners danced and sang not so much in West Berlin or East Berlin as in No Man's Land, on the Wall itself.

Berlin is now stripped of its most potent symbol. The Wall is no longer there. Of course there are still reminders of what used to be. Bits of the Wall have been preserved for graffiti artists and tourists. The Wall Museum in the House at Checkpoint Charlie is still there, though Checkpoint Charlie itself is long since gone. Guard towers, barbed wire, searchlights, German shepherds, machine guns—they are all commemorated here and there. In flea markets at the Brandenburg Gate you can still buy Soviet and East German army paraphernalia, as well as Communist buttons, badges, and orders. But it's not the same any more. The spine-tingling evil just isn't there. One sees tourists wandering aimlessly around where the Wall used to be, not quite sure of themselves. What to do in Berlin without the Wall?

While I was in Berlin this summer, after a three-year absence, I lived in an apartment building in the "East," in a district between the former Soviet and American sectors. The Wall used to run right beneath my apartment building. As a result, there had been no traffic, and the street had been very quiet.

Now, with the Wall gone, there is a grassy but unkempt park full of trash and burned-out automobiles. From my apartment building, you can now walk out the door and across the park, and in thirty seconds you have traveled from East to West Berlin. In the morning, you can buy your fresh breakfast rolls and newspapers in either East or West Berlin. It still shocks me and gives me a feeling of deep satisfaction, after so many years of abnormality, that it is now possible to do such things.

Nevertheless, asked how the opening of the Wall has affected them, many residents on both the western and eastern sides of my street respond in a rather jaded and undramatic way. They say that traffic has increased, that they are worried about crime and drugs and their children, and that a woman can't go out alone



STEPHEN BROCKMANN *is assistant professor of German studies at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh.*

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at night any more the way she used to "in the good old days."

"In the good old days." I heard that phrase several times during my stay. Meant ironically, it also revealed the extent of discomfort with rapid change. After the first excitement of freedom in November 1989, the further consequences of that open border have long since become clear.

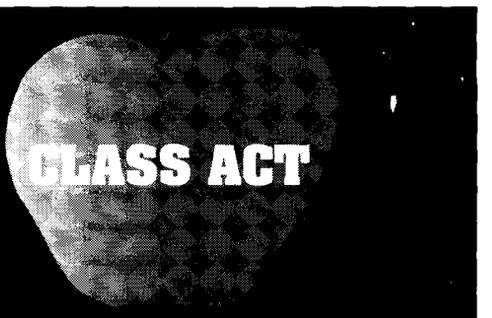
Most important, the Wall, like any other national border, had been an economic barrier protecting East Germany from West German competition. With the collapse of the Wall and German economic reunification on July 1, 1990, East German companies were forced to compete on an equal playing field with their West German competitors. The results were economic collapse and massive unemployment. No other country in the former Communist bloc was forced to move so rapidly and radically to a free-market economy. Thanks to huge West German transfer payments to the East—on the order of a hundred billion marks a year—the social and economic misery of unemployment and industrial decline has largely been offset by welfare payments, unemployment compensation, and other safety-net measures. But the extremely rapid transformation in the economy and in social structures has been and continues to be wrenching.

One of the first surprises for me on my arrival in Berlin was the extent to which, in spite of the Wall's demise, West and East Berlin very much continue to exist as separate geographic, sociological, and even spiritual entities. Although the Wall itself no longer exists, the vast, empty spaces through which it used to cut its swath continue to testify to the city's long division.

For the most part, East Berliners continue to do most of their business in East Berlin, while West Berliners do theirs in West Berlin. People on my side of the street continue to view themselves as Easterners, while the people in the apartments on the other side of the street continue to view themselves as Westerners. For the most part, neither Easterners nor Westerners want much to do with each other. "They are all plastic people," was the typical comment of one East German friend of mine. "They don't interest me at all. Their ideal is the clean white teeth and smooth cheeks of a toothpaste commercial. Such people are completely without inner depth and warmth." The disillusionment with the West, albeit somewhat clichéd, was deep. "We expected that behind their fancy automobiles and their beautiful clothes there must be fascinating, beautiful, lovable people. But the only thing that's interesting about them is what they drive and what they wear."

"The only really admirable people in the West are the ones in the RAF," suggested one friend, referring to the terrorist group, the Red Army Faction, which in April 1991, claimed responsibility for the assassination of Detlev Rohwedder, the chief of the trustee agency responsible for privatizing East Germany's state-owned industries.

While I was in East Berlin, the most popular best seller in the former German Democratic Republic was a play called *Wessis in Weimar* by the controversial playwright Rolf Hochhuth (author of *The Deputy*). The play's opening scene is a dramatic rendering of Rohwedder's assassination. One of my more bitter East German acquaintances suggested that what had hap-



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pened to Rohwedder might well—and indeed should—happen to other West German officials.

It is now quite clear that in spite of their professed concern for East Germany and desire for German reunification, West German authorities were as caught off guard by 1989 as anyone else. They knew very little about the country to their east and failed to recognize the extent of the problems associated with German reunification. In 1990 Chancellor Kohl had foolishly declared that a new German economic miracle was around the corner, that no one would be worse off as a result of German unification, and that East Germany would soon become a blossoming landscape.

What happened instead was a short-lived boom in the West as a result of pent-up East German consumer demand, followed by the most severe postwar recession Germany has experienced, with unemployment levels in East Germany significantly surpassing the levels of the Great Depression. Particularly hard-hit have been women and people in their late forties and fifties, considered too old to train for new jobs and too young to be given early retirement and pensions. One woman in my street declared that for her, life was over: "Not a single good thing has come to me as a result of German unification," she said.

The extent and ferocity of the hatred between East and West Germans surprised and troubled me. Derogatory words like *Besserwessis* (a play on the words *better* and *Wessi*, implying Westerners who think they know it all and are far superior to their *Ossi* cousins) and *Jammerossis* (a play on the words *whine* and *Ossi*, implying Easterners who are constantly complaining and viewing everything negatively) have been in circulation for quite some time, but the reality behind them is disturbing. A poll published while I was in Germany showed that, even three years after unification, most young West Germans still have not had any personal contact with East Germans. While most East Germans had by now had personal contact with West Germans, a great many viewed those contacts negatively.

Just as in the times of communism, it is hard to engage in any kind of conversation in East Germany without quickly coming to the political situation. A great many East Germans feel that their country has been colonized and exploited by the West. "We are the new niggers," suggested one actor during a conversation in an East Berlin theater, "and the West Germans are the colonial lords." What he was referring to was the fact that most of the key bureaucratic and governmental positions in East Germany are now occupied by Westerners who come to "hardship posts" in the East for a year or two to help realign the East German bureaucracy according to Western standards. While this kind of help is no doubt genuinely necessary to coordinate the infrastructure in both parts of Germany—after all, it was East Germany that joined West Germany, and not the other way round—East Germans tend to perceive it as a kind of colonialism.

Meanwhile, all East Germans in key positions, from professors to sanitation engineers, have been subjected to rigorous scrutiny to determine the extent of their collaboration with the Communist regime. Many East Germans feel that such scrutiny too often degenerates into exaggerated denunciations of all East Germans for the crime of being East German.

One particularly poignant example of the divisions between East and West came at the end of June, when gays and lesbians in Berlin celebrated Stonewall Day, the traditional Gay Pride Day in the United States and Europe. Berlin had been chosen as the collecting point for Europe's gays this year—the city of "Europride," as the organizers called it—and so gays and lesbians streamed in from London and Paris, only to find that there had been a schism in Berlin's gay community. In the West, the more nonpolitical, consumer-oriented gays marched down Kurfürstendamm, West Berlin's equivalent of Fifth Avenue, celebrating gay lifestyles; in the East, the more politicized, in-your-face gays marched through the former Jewish ghetto and campaigned against xenophobia and anti-Semitism. The split within Berlin's gay community seemed to reflect precisely the split within the city itself: in the West, glitz and glitter; in the East, grit and bitterness.

In spite of the continuing high levels of violence against foreigners in Germany, I could not get over the feeling that the very generalized concept "foreigners" was being used all over the political spectrum as a way of distracting attention from Germany's very serious problems with itself. The real story in Germany is German animosity toward one another. The real secret behind German unification, I suspect, is that no one in particular wanted it. After forty years of separation, the Germans had grown completely estranged, and the process of unification has intensified rather than alleviated that estrangement. The

Michael Cadnum

Flying over a River

Sky
covers everything. Earth is sectioned,
parceled except where the trees shag the loops
and runs of the water.

Not sea, not earth, its steel
slices one field and spills
into another so it burns in sun.
Cars glint along a levee,
and the bug of airplane shadow far
below fans and contracts

along a river that searches
without moving, finds
without losing, all the way

to the edge of the visible,
yellow as the field, bright
as the horizon, perfect
as the emptiness that
carries us away.

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hatred of foreigners in both West and East serves as a convenient cover for the deeper resentments between the two Germanies. The troubled, violent youth in West and East Germany are using foreigners as scapegoats for their own problems in coming to terms with life in the more difficult circumstances of the unified Germany.

What is rarely mentioned in the discussion about foreigners and refugees in Germany and Europe is that the situation is a direct result of the collapse of the cold-war system and the rigid border controls which once existed in Eastern Europe. Western governments used to issue solemn statements condemning the lack of freedom to travel in the East. In fact, however, the Iron Curtain prevented millions of potential refugees from coming West: the Communists were efficient border guards not only for themselves but for Western Europe.

Now Western Europe is in the difficult position of having to put its money where its mouth is (or was). If it is truly for freedom to travel, then it can hardly build walls and iron curtains of its own. If it is against freedom to travel, then its declarations during the cold war are exposed as mere rhetoric. Either way, the increasing openness, fluidity, and internationalization of the world's economy demand tough choices for Germany and other European countries: closing down borders means cutting off potential access to the world economy; but opening up borders means exposing less-privileged citizens to low-wage competition from abroad. This, too, is part of the "new world order" that is emerging in the wake of the collapse of communism. In a world without borders, the third world can come to the first world, while the social contract within the first world crumbles; but a country with rigid border controls risks isolating itself from economic development.

As I left Berlin this time, I was acutely aware that here was a city and a country in the process of remaking themselves. In the new Europe, much depends on the outcome of that remaking. □

STAGE

PICK A PAIR

'SUMMER HOUSE' & 'PERFECT GANESH'

"There's no point in writing a play for your five hundred goony friends," Jane Bowles said in *Vogue* (May 1, 1954), shortly after her play *In the Summer House* opened and closed on Broadway. "You have to reach more people." Forty years after that event, Lincoln Center has revived the play, under the direction of Joanne Akalaitis, perhaps because the producers suspect that there is more Bowles-style gooniness around in the 1990s than there was in the 1950s. Without ever knowing the woman, I was one of her goony friends from the beginning. The play both baffled and delighted me when I first saw it. It had

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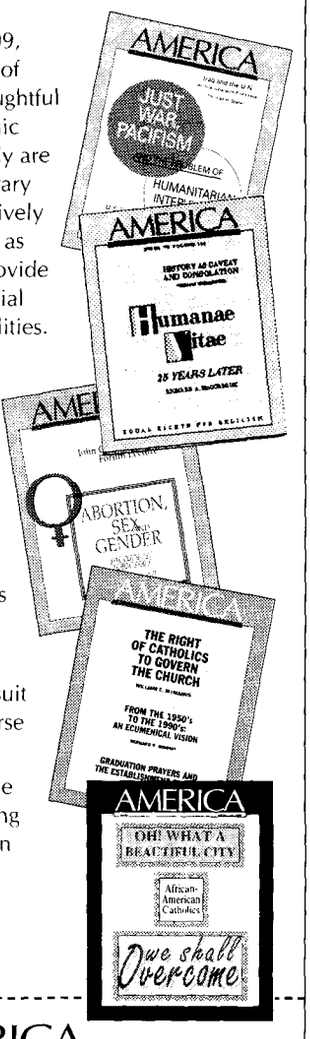

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conventional psychological tensions buried beneath its eccentric surface: mother-daughter conflict in a decade in which playwrights—male for the most part—worried more about father-son confrontation.

Mrs. Eastman Cuevas, the play's matriarch, appears to be an extremely strong woman who offers advice not love to Molly, her reclusive daughter, but who, when the mother's own vulnerability breaks through her defenses, loses Molly to Lionel, Molly's young and somewhat peripheral husband. In Bowles's work, men tend to be peripheral. Here, as in her novel *Two Serious Ladies*, Bowles's strange women tend to go in pairs. Mrs. Constable is the victim-protector of her edgily over-enthusiastic young daughter who takes a header into death (accident? suicide? murder?: I prefer the first of these), thus freeing her mother to become a garrulous drunk. It is misleading to describe the play in these terms, although these are the forces that feed the plot, because such compression gives no sense of the texture of the play. Bowles, dealing with potentially disastrous and painful material, is essentially a fine comic writer; but the voices of her characters in this play pull the work askew, derail the psychological train that another playwright might ride to the finish, and often leave the reader/viewer reaching for a platitudinous handhold which is not there. I am not thinking of the broad comedy of Mr. Solares, Mrs. Eastman Cuevas's suitor, and his noisy extended family, but of remarkable verbal constructions like Mrs. E. C.'s long opening monologue.

Akalaitis, who has been known to play artistically fast and loose with texts that she stages, sticks close to Bowles's script and her apparent intention. The ending is somewhat different from that of the published play; Molly now acts on her own rather than being released by her mother. Somewhat surprisingly, since Akalaitis highlights Mrs. Eastman Cuevas's dissimulated memory of her childhood in her first speech (highlights grandly: Jennifer Tipton did the lighting), at the end of the play Mrs. E. C. does not return to her childhood jealousy of her sister. Instead, as the lights go down, she is trying to answer Mrs. Constable's questions about the summer house. Since the summer house is Molly's old hiding place, this ending suggests that Mrs. E. C. and her daughter have switched roles.

I could have done without the final scene in the first act, in which Molly and Lionel, the newlyweds, sit side by side reading comic books; I prefer Molly's confusion ("I don't know. I don't know. It looks so different...") to even so oblique a promise of their continued union at the end of the play. Akalaitis's treatment of Bowles's comic Mexicans is excess in the right direction, the addition of the music underlining the preposterousness of Solares and family. I had my doubts about some of the performers, but Frances Conroy was a perfect Mrs. Constable. Dianne Wiest could not, of course, touch the regality of Judith Anderson, the original Mrs. E. C., and she never quite got the tone of that opening speech, but much of her performance was impressive. All right, all right, I know these are quibbles—indications of my respect for Bowles's play—and I know that the important thing about the new production of *In the Summer House* is that it did very well by the author, the play, Lincoln Center, and all the goonies that got a chance to see it.

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Compared to Bowles, Terrence McNally is a very direct, very explicit playwright. I say this hesitantly because in *A Perfect Ganesh* (recently at the Manhattan Theatre Club), his two serious ladies travel to India where they meet a variety of men (all played by two actors, one of whom wears the elephant head of Ganesha) and where they come to terms—or almost come to terms—with their various guilts and losses.

Margaret (Frances Sternhagen) is rigid, defensive, and far too neat; she uses her sense of propriety and her very sharp tongue to mask the pain she still feels at the accidental death of her first child years before and the less painful fact that her marriage is no marriage. Kitty (Zoe Caldwell) is sloppy, forgetful, open to new experiences, but is dogged by guilt at having waited too long to accept her son's homosexuality. He died of a beating before she could reach him and he wanders, blood-stained, around the stage and her mind until she manages to separate her prejudices from those of his killers. She has come to India to kiss a leper on the lips, she says, and she finally does. This is presumably her willingness to accept all of life, its ugliness as well as its beauty (Ganesha is the embodiment of this idea), but I confess to being a little ill-at-ease at an image which seems to be making an analogy between leprosy and homosexuality. When McNally kills off Kitty's husband in her absence, he seems to be laying it on a bit thickly; but perhaps the playwright wants some kind of balance between the marriages of the two characters. At the end, these two old friends have become friends in a deeper sense, sharers of each other's burdens. Both women are very funny in their very different ways and McNally has given characteristic comic lines to both of them. Although the two male actors (Dominic Cuskern and Fisher Stevens) have much tricky work to do as they shift from character to character, it is the two women who are at the center of the play. Sternhagen and Caldwell are a pleasure to watch, whether they are going for laughs or tears (more properly, sentiment too tough for easy tears).

GERALD WEALES

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A poke over the wall

THE MUSEUM OF CLEAR IDEAS
New Poems
Donald Hall
Ticknor & Fields, $18.95, 120 pp.

Suzanne Keen

Donald Hall's new book of poems, *The Museum of Clear Ideas*, made me want to run out into the yard and shout. And check the tomatoes, and the box scores. To reread Horace, James Wright, and to undertake a study of the undervalued art of tone. As I write, we have shaken loose the bonds of the basketball season, and turned our full attention to baseball. If you're near a major league stadium, you're probably close to a bookstore that carries poetry. Get *The Museum of Clear Ideas*; it's perfect for the season, and you can reread it when winter comes and the tyranny of the hoop grips the nation once again.

Clad in Williams-and-Sonoma yuppie green, the book's cover only hints at its organizing conceit with an outline of home plate. The poems in this volume tackle the problem of coming to an ending from a variety of perspectives and forms: elegy, lyric sequence, and Horatian ode. Hall deploys his work in and against these genres in a sequence that invites meditation on their characteristic relations to time and to human means of marking time.

If the shape of the sequence "Baseball," in nine innings, made of nine, nine-line stanzas suggests that the end must occur exactly where it does, when the form actually runs out, the poem leaves the reader in a condition of suspension between games, between actions, between memory of past seasons and appetite for another season:

> 9. No Red Sox tonight, but on Friday
> a doubleheader with the Detroit
> Tigers, my terrible old team, worse
> than the Red Sox who beat the
> Yankees
> last night while my mother and I

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watched
—the way we listened, fifty years
back—
spritely ghosts playing in heavy snow
on VHS 30 from Hartford,
and the pitcher stared at the batter.

Though they watch in the hospital, the outcomes of the illnesses that "Baseball" has documented go unreported; with a deft hand Hall waves away the symbols and allegories that so often infest literary versions of baseball. No home-run and heaven here. He directs our attention away from the diamond to the natural world:

By the railroad goldenrod stiffens;
asters begin a late pennant drive
in front of the barn; pink hollyhocks
wilt and sag like teams out of the race.

Good old-fashioned metaphor conjures up two kinds of time in a delightful shimmer of tenor and vehicle. "Baseball" inhabits an alternative realm already, a fictional space suspended outside of ordinary time. Addressed to the Dada collagist Kurt Schwitters (1887-1948), the poem attempts an explanation of the theory and practice of baseball, through meditations obliquely related to the 9 x 9 x 9 form. The enjambment, or running over lines, between the stanzas of the "First Inning" contrast with the businesslike picked-up pace of the "Third Inning." In this fashion the shape of the sequence instructs its imagined reader in the pace(s) of the game. Yet the material contained in this vessel of Hall's invention suggests the reach and amplitude of an imagination at play in the fields of memory, opinion, prophecy, and fresh experience. Hall's ability to use varied sentence-structure, and the cohabitation of sentence and line in stanzas, to emphasize shifts in tone and rhetorical strategy keeps this long poem from dulling in the ear. This interesting communication makes a significant contribution to poetry's conversation about the relations between visual art and literature.

In focusing on "Baseball," I have leapt ahead in the order of the book, which begins, wryly, with "Another Elegy." When I heard Hall read this poem, he explained that the fiction of the poem allowed him to write his long-stalled elegy for the poet James Wright, who died in 1980. Bill Trout, the dead poet remembered in "Another Elegy," is a creature of invention, but this has been the case in poets' elegies for fellow poets, from Milton at least. How much does "Lycidas" tell us about dead Edward King, and how much about ambitious John Milton? Even the rhetoric of praise and blame distorts the remembered life. Hall writes a canny critique of the form and its history:

It is twelve Aprils since we buried
him. Now dissertation-
salt preserves *The Collected Poems*
of William Trout
like Lenin. Here is another elegy in
the tradition
of mourning and envy, love and self-
love—as another morning
delivers rain on the fishbone leaves
of the rotted year.

The humor with which Hall delivers and lampoons the conventions of elegy is carried further by the hilarious spoof of the canonizing poet's bio, "from" the imaginary *The Norton Anthology of Contemporary Verse*. Appearing in the "notes" section of *The Museum of Clear Ideas*, this further fiction lays bare a convention of contemporary poetry books: the appendix of notes used as an exhibit of the poet's learning and as a key to obscurities the reader will have encountered.

Hall identifies the *persona*, Horace Horsecollar, who speaks the odes of the poem "The Museum of Clear Ideas," in such a note: "Lacking Latin, he follows his master visually—the number and shape of stanzas in Horace's first book of odes." These poems form the volume's second sequence, in which the range of tones and topics widens even further. As in "Another Elegy" and "Baseball," the state of contemporary poetry comes under Hall's scrutiny; Horsecollar does not exempt his ventriloquizer when he criticizes: "Praising our places, we / praise ourselves while pretending to look outward." Poets build shrines to themselves,

in every *Poetry*, by printing
reflections, in free verse
without noticeable attention to
line breaks, on snapshots of the
poetic mother and father,
in their weird clothes, on
vacation, before
the poet was born: How poignant it
is, how remarkable
that one's parents were older
than oneself!
Then they died. Oh.

This cutting indictment of the bland subject matter and weak form of contemporary poetry does not attempt to disguise Hall's own interest in remembering persons and places, in fixing the details of daily life in verse. In *The Museum of Clear Ideas* a reader will find love poems, poems about a sick parent, frightening diagnoses, aging, sex, and the old neighborhood. Hall does not eschew the ordinary; he inhabits it. Books and poems and language

"Come on, Donald—everyone *has a 'dream team!'"*

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belong in this poet's everyday world, so we find poems about old affairs or old friends cheek by jowl with his criticism of contemporary poetry.

Hall's determination to renew language's energetic engagement with the world calls our attention to the rhetoric we use in our daily interactions. Hall deplores the falsity of what he calls "The Jargon of Things," and "The Tongue of High Coy." In a book preoccupied with the problem of making an end, of reacting honestly to the endings that herald our own foregone conclusion, the danger of language's misuse should not be underestimated.

The final poem in the book, "Extra Innings," takes up the fear of death directly. In these extra poems, which surprise the reader with a return to "Baseball," Hall suggests that compassionate actions and the solaces of dailiness can hold fear at bay. Loss is forestalled but not denied in the conclusion to "Extra Innings," which recalls the penultimate game of the 1975 World Series:

> I wear my yellow sweater;
> we eat scrambled eggs from blue and white dishes; her
> hair's kerchief is yellow. We gather yellow days
> inning by inning with care to appear careless,
> thinking again how Carlton Fisk ended game Six
> in the twelfth inning with a poke over the wall.

Do I need to point out that the Red Sox go on to lose the Series in the seventh game? Anyone who has suffered with a team, or waited for the results of the blood test to come in, knows the condition that Hall describes, "inning by inning with care to appear careless." Hall celebrates the ceremonial calendar of the baseball season in its relation to human lives. In poetry, in patterned language unleashed in time, Hall arrests us in the moment of hope that holds off the end. □

THE SANCTITY OF CHOICE

THE POLITICS OF VIRTUE
Is Abortion Debatable?
Elizabeth Mensch and Alan Freeman
Duke University Press, $14.95, 268 pp.

LIFE'S DOMINION
An Argument about Abortion, Euthanasia, and Individual Freedom
Ronald Dworkin
Alfred A Knopf, $23, 273 pp.

Daniel Callahan

The language of compromise on the abortion issue is in the air. There has long been an underground movement in that direction, feeding off the perennial public opinion surveys that show most Americans ambivalent about the issue. Yet this movement—and that word may be too strong—has had trouble finding the kind of strong leadership and focused agenda that could translate into an effective political force.

Now, however, the possibility of compromise has some intensified drive behind it. There is fresh pressure on Congress to find a way to deal with abortion in light of the coming debate on the Clinton administration's health-care plan, likely to include some abortion provisions, and because of the difficulties already being generated with the Senate's Freedom of Choice Act.

Playing an important supportive role may be a number of recent books that have sought, with varying success, to find some acceptable middle ground. Two earlier books by prochoice advocates took an irenical stance. The legal scholar, Laurence Tribe, in *Abortion: The Clash of Absolutes* (Norton, 1990), and Roger Rosenblatt in *Life Itself: Abortion in the American Mind* (Random House, 1992) both deplored the nasty flavor of the American debate, and both sought some way out. Rosenblatt's was the more successful of those two efforts, arguing for what he called a "permit but discourage formula." But he provided no details whatever on just what such a formula would look like in practice. Nor did he take account of the likely opposition of many feminists. They would not warm to that word "discourage."

The problem with Tribe's book was that his prochoice convictions were not sufficiently flexible to accommodate the moderate approach he seemed to be seeking. Every possible way to a compromise solution was shot down, always overpowered by fear of some limit on the right of women to make their own choice. The label on the can was hot tamales but the contents turned out to be rice pudding.

The two books reviewed here are more penetrating and nuanced, particularly that of Mensch and Freeman. Themselves legal scholars (and married to each other), they also, and most tellingly, have a fine eye for postwar theological and cultural developments. *The Politics of Virtue* takes as its starting point the question of "whether we can recover a meaningful public moral vocabulary."

Why does our society lack such a vocabulary? Mensch and Freeman pursue that question as insightfully as any who have written on this much-written-about topic, with a particular focus on the theological debate. They have a convincing answer: "abortion as a theologically debatable subject [was] replaced by abortion as a matter of personal choice and medical expertise," both well suited to stifle serious reflection. Mensch and Freeman pursue the story of that replacement with great skill and plausibility. Along the way they examine the rise and then decline of natural law thought, heavily Catholic in its inspiration; a similar curve with the thought of Barth and Bonhoeffer in Protestant circles; and the ultimate and decisive triumph of a "hasty, uncritical covenant with secular culture" in mainline Protestantism. That "covenant" provided a religious legitimation for abortion reform, but also as a result stimulated a Protestant fundamentalist counterattack, which turned out to be an unpleasant mirror image of a liberal prochoice fundamentalism.

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Many of the strengths of *The Politics of Virtue* are missing from the Dworkin book, though he also is a legal scholar. Where Mensch and Freeman immerse the reader in the cultural and religious background of the abortion struggle, and show a fine appreciation of the now-vast literature on the subject, Dworkin's book looks mainly to the legal battle, and frequently generalizes on the moral issues without the apparent benefit of careful distinctions and documentation. This gap makes a great difference in the quality of his general argument. His argument is fairly simple: both the prolife and the prochoice groups share a common dedication to the sanctity of life, and only differ about how to respect that sanctity. But since the notion of the sanctity of life is itself an inherently religious or philosophical idea, it is not an appropriate subject for public law but should, instead, be left to the individual conscience and individual choice. This thesis is, Dworkin contends, equally applicable to euthanasia and abortion.

There is a two-fold problem with this argument. The first is that it overlooks some important factionalism within the prochoice movement. It is by no means the case that many who have defended a prochoice position either imply, much less speak, the language of the sanctity of life. Many instead hold that whatever value a fetus has is a result of a right to existence conferred upon it by the mother; its value depends solely upon her decision to grant it value. That is a sanctity of choice argument, not a sanctity of life view. The second problem is that by, in effect, segregating religious and philosophical views off into the private domain, Dworkin not only ignores the religious and philosophical foundations of much of our polity and culture, but also renders the idea of the sanctity of life thin if not altogether vacuous.

Dworkin argues, as many now do, that it is a mistake to cast the abortion struggle as that of contending rights, the fetus against the pregnant woman. But by trying to push the issue into a still higher, almost ineffable realm, Dworkin in the end leaves little ground to talk in public about morality. It is put out of bounds.

Reading the two books together helps one see why Dworkin's position (albeit with his own twists and turns) has come to seem so self-evident to so many mainline American intellectuals. By trying to uncover the origins of that reassuring conviction, Mensch and Freeman open the way to a more productive debate in the future. □

YES, ABORTION IS DEBATABLE

THE POLITICS OF VIRTUE
Is Abortion Debatable?
Elizabeth Mensch and Alan Freeman
Duke University Press, $14.95, 268 pp.

Jean Bethke Elshtain

Mensch and Freeman do the impossible or the seemingly impossible: they bring fresh insights to the abortion debate. Along the way, they fold in a rich narrative about the important ways in which the abortion discussion touches the current controversies over human treatment of nonhuman creatures. Even more amazingly (we just don't expect this from law professors!), they proffer subtle and interesting insights about what has happened to "Protestant ethics." On this score they offer biting (not bitter) commentary on the virtual disappearance of Karl Barth from current Protestant "civic religion," as well as the trivializing of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. They show clearly how Bonhoeffer was made to serve liberal theological nostrums that he, Lutheran that he was, found banal in his own lifetime. Quite a list of accomplishments for one highly readable, compact volume.

The authors, a married couple teaching law at the State University of New York, Buffalo, begin with candid personal revelations. Each has had more than one "firsthand experience of abortion, including illegal abortion"; between them they have five children from previous and present unions. These facts are crisply stated and do not become the occasion for bathos. With that they are off to the races, beginning with the by-now familiar observation that we live in a time of deep moral conflict and that we are pretty much at the end of our tethers where several competing traditions (Kantianism and utilitarianism, for example) are concerned. Identified with the "Left/liberal side of law and politics," the authors have done what most people on that side of things have consistently, even militantly, refused to do: try "especially hard to understand the prolife side of this debate."

Their stated goal is "not to advance one side or the other in the abortion debate, but rather to explore whether we are necessarily stuck with the grim and destructive fact of moral incommensurability." It must be said, however, that simply by taking seriously and unpacking from "the inside out" the impassioned arguments of anti-abortion forces, they do their part to advance that side of the debate within an implacably hostile academy. What Mensch and Freeman appear to desire is an authentic liberalism: an ability to weigh carefully each side and each position. Refreshing, to say the least.

In building their case they turn first to friends and comrades on the Left, arguing that the issue of fetal life cannot be dismissed with incessant repetition of the code words: "reproductive freedom." Second, to their prolife readers, who may or may not be liberals, they argue that committing oneself to a concern with fetal life commits oneself to other things, or, at least, to other questions, including who else among us may or may not be worthy of moral concerns. The animals make their first appearance here. Rather than tackling these intertwined matters in the usual polemical fashion, Mensch and Freeman begin by looking closely at the natural law tradition associated primarily with Catholicism and to the Protestant ethics associated with Barth and Bonhoeffer.

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My terribly truncated version of their discussion would be that they find the natural law tradition too confining and too cheese-paring in its approach, proliferating fine distinctions where there isn't a trenchant difference. By offering ostensibly leakage-free categories to rescue us, including a sharp human/animal duality, natural law makes our moral assessments too easy. Such absolutist distinctions and prohibitions, the authors claim, won't help us through the maze of contemporary difficulties.

Here Protestant ethics would seem to offer a more supple set of possibilities. But problems pop up immediately because mainline Protestantism has simply caved in to the cravings, dressed up in the regalia of rights, endemic to our contemporary consumerist culture. Liberal Protestantism refuses to admit the "darker realities" that may lurk beneath some of its own endorsements. The "heady liberalism of the 1960s" promised much (more than it could deliver, we now know) including a world devoid of "Caution," "Go Slow," or, God forbid, "Stop" signs. We were free to do or be anything we wanted without regard for limits. The courts became the place liberals turned to articulate "a new morality premised on an individual autonomy that was legally secured by a regime of rights."

The ethicists found warrant for cultural and political changes in, among others, Barth and Bonhoeffer. But, as our authors note, Barth worried about the "mistaken direction" the liberal German theologian Schleiermacher had taken us, namely, to a "willingness to make theology and the church subservient to the demands of prevailing political ideologies and scientific or cultural orthodoxies." This, alas, is precisely what happened in America. The crudest sort of "situationist" ethics gained widespread adherence—the secularization of mainline religion, Mensch and Freeman call it—and Bonhoeffer especially was vulgarized by liberals to serve situationist ends.

Tracing the capitulation of mainline Protestantism in this way, Mensch and Freeman help the reader make sense of the fundamentalist reaction. Fundamentalists could not accept a moral universe in which "sin" no longer figured. The "basic abortion-on-demand reality of *Roe*

v. *Wade*" catapulted them into action. The most articulate recognized that "accompanying zeal for solving the abortion problem through constitutional litigation was a striking contempt, even distaste, for sectarian religion, religiously rooted morality, or even the notion that abortion might raise a serious question of morality from a theological perspective." Indeed, the prochoice forces were—and are—so successful in making this move that *any* opposition to abortion-on-demand from a theologically articulated perspective fell under a cloud of suspicion, pumped up by the mainline media, that what such folks *really* wanted was an "unconstitutional establishment of religion." With admirable understatement, Mensch and Freeman point out how this accusation not only oversimplifies a whole range of subtle and difficult issues, but drives fundamentalists into ever more extreme articulations of their position, which in turn get constructed as *the* position against abortion.

So it goes. Or so it seems. But Mensch and Freeman are undaunted. Believing as they do that *Roe* v. *Wade* was a terrible mistake—badly argued, sociologically inept, and "politically disastrous"—they hold forth hope that less inflammatory possibilities might yet be within our reach. They conclude by articulating the possibility of a compromise, one that shores up rather than undermines the premises of our liberal polity—a polity that was, from its inception, dependent upon social institutions not explicitly mentioned in the Constitution—on a kind of social deposit of intergenerational trust, neighborliness, and civic responsibility. Today, we must tend to those social institutions on which we depend as well as to a wider natural world of other creatures and their habitats—all part of our own human home.

With all the baby-boom nostalgia now in full bloom in the corridors of power, the mordant note on which Mensch and Freeman conclude is startling in its clarity, its modesty, and its pithy reproach of our culture of therapeutic, expressivist individualism: "The same culture produced a generation, of which we were a part, that had little use for humility, denied our own sinfulness, and lacked any sense of restraint or limits. In retrospect, a number of appropriate responses to oppressive conditions led to a culture of unrestrained excess."

If we are to have an authentic, civil debate on abortion—let alone on a whole range of other weighty and volatile matters—it is books such as this that will lead the way. If *The Politics of Virtue* receives a wide audience, people of good will will surely shrink from *pronunciamentos* to the effect that prolifers are doddering celibates from a "male-dominated church" who have a "love affair with the fetus," in the words of our new surgeon general, or that prochoicers are accomplices to murder. To be honest, I am less sanguine than Mensch and Freeman in this matter. Still, I applaud their important work. □

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THE IMMORTAL GREEN

THE GREEN PARADISE
Autobiography: Volume 1 (1900-1916)
Julian Green
Marion Boyars Publishers, $24.95, 248 pp.

THE APPRENTICE WRITER
Essays
Julian Green
Marion Boyars Publishers, $24.95, 255 pp.

David O'Connell

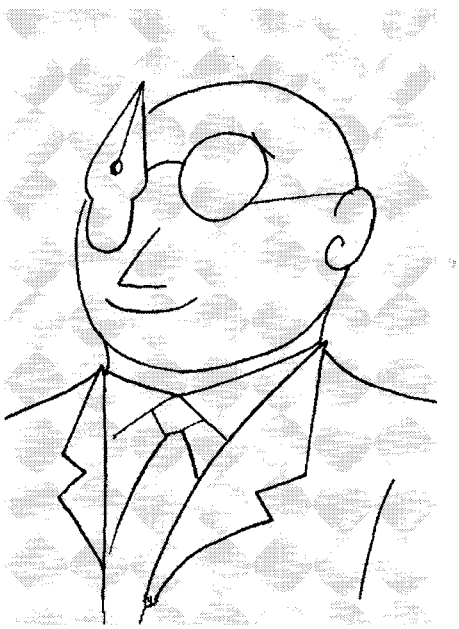
One day in September 1908, Péguy had a conversation with his friend Lotte, about his many worries, when all of a sudden his eyes filled with tears and he said: "I have not told you all. I have found faith again. I am a Catholic." This was the outcome of a long struggle about which we know practically nothing. What went on in Péguy's soul from the time he declared himself an atheist, around '92 or '93, to the minute when he unburdened his heart to Lotte is a mystery that will probably never be solved. Nor did this conversion mean a simplifying of life's problems for Péguy. On the contrary. Only from the outside do conversions appear to simplify life's problems.

—Julian Green
The Apprentice Writer

Julian Green is the first American ever to have been elected as one of the forty "immortals" who can belong to the French Academy at any one time. He has been a major French novelist since the 1920s, when works like *Adrienne Mesurat* (1927), *Mont-Cinère* (1928), and *Léviathan* (1929) appeared. Then in the '30s he began to publish his diary, which has attracted a good deal of critical attention over the last half century. Since the 1960s, large sections of the diary have been available in English. Most recently, two very long historical novels, dealing with life in the antebellum American South, have appeared. *Les pays lointains* (which the publisher of the books under consideration here has already brought out under the title *The Distant Lands*), appeared in Paris in 1987 and its sequel, *Les étoiles du sud*, in 1989. These works have enabled Green to reach an extremely wide audience rather late in life. A recent elaborate photo essay in the magazine *Paris-Match* reflects this newly found popularity. Yet, despite Green's many literary accomplishments spanning almost three quarters of a century, his name is still not as widely known in this country as it should be.

These two important volumes seem to reflect a British publisher's commitment to make Green's work more readily available in the English-speaking world, to which he belongs by birth and family upbringing. Born in 1900 and raised in Paris as a boy where his American parents lived, Green developed an ear for the cadences of the American South listening to his parents speak. His father worked for the Southern Cotton Oil Company and specialized in importing cottonseed oil into France. As a boy, Green was initiated into French culture by attending grade school and secondary school in Paris. He received a bicultural upbringing in an age when that word had not yet been invented and when we still had to make do with the word "bilingual" which, in stressing language at the expense of culture, seemed to imply that the worlds of Paris on the one hand and of Savannah on the other were essentially the same and that it was only the words that people spoke every day that were different.

Green finished his French *baccalauréat* degree in 1917 and then, after service in the ambulance corps at the end of World War I, came back to his family roots in Virginia and Georgia by enrolling at the University of Virginia, where he remained for three years (1919-22) without finishing his degree. After this first reimmersion in his native culture, he went back to France determined to become a French writer; and by the end of the twenties he had established a solid reputation as a young Catholic novelist and man of letters. Green emerged in the wake of the major Catholic cultural figures that I call the Generation of 1885: Mauriac, Bernanos, Maritain, Teilhard de Chardin, Gilson, Gabriel Marcel, among others. Later, after the five-year period spent in the United States between 1940 and 1945, he returned to France since he considered that country to be his true cultural home.



These volumes show us the two sides of Green's persona, the French and the American. *The Green Paradise*, translated by his sister Anne Green, is the first volume of his autobiography, *Partir avant le jour*, which first appeared in Paris in 1963. It shows the self-absorbed sensitivity of a young man and in so doing reminds us of so many of the other French mama's boys from a bourgeois background who have poured out their inner feelings to their readers. Like his elders Gide (b. 1869) and Mauriac (b. 1885), for example, Green in this confessional memoir deliberately positions himself in the French tradition through his keen awareness and sharply observant eye for everything that goes on both around him and inside of him. In fact, what goes on outside often takes on meaning only to the extent that it reverberates

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on the inside.

The experiences of an American boy growing up in Paris in the years before World War I are recounted here from the perspective of the sophisticated French writer he later became. His Christian faith, inherited from his mother, is already firm, and the evolution from the Episcopal upbringing to the Catholic church parallels the shift from American to French culture. For Green the adhesion to Catholicism as both a religious and cultural phenomenon is necessary if he is to participate fully in French culture. His special attachment to two churches in the Latin Quarter, Saint-Séverin and Saint-Julien-le-Pauvre, symbolizes this aesthetic attraction. When he walks along the river after having visited and prayed in each of these churches, he glances up at the spires of Notre Dame in the distance and says to himself: "This is my city. It is mine. I belong here." In this he speaks simply and eloquently for many Catholics from around the world who have had a similar experience. In March 1916, he freely converted to Catholicism.

The limpid style, the sensitivity, the *délicatesse*, the discretion in talking of his sexual awakening are all in the French tradition of restraint, sobriety, and good taste. His achievement is all the more striking since his carnal desires were directed toward members of his own sex.

This book is marred by the lack of an index. Even more troubling is the lack of any kind of serious introductory essay that would place this first volume of Green's autobiography within the context of his career. It is important to know, for instance, that when *Partir avant le jour* first appeared in 1963, it was conceived by Green as a recounting of a spiritual itinerary, a description of the action of grace within his soul as seen by a man in his midsixties able to recognize more clearly in retrospect how God had worked within him during his early years. The fact that Green's decision to write an autobiography coincides in time not only with the beginning of the sexual revolution but also with Vatican II is worthy of note. Green, despite his sexual orientation, was sure of his place in the church even though the church itself might not have been. (It should be noted that this first volume of the autobiography was previously published in New York in 1963 under the title *To Leave before Dawn*.)

The essays contained in *The Apprentice Writer* represent Julian Green the American, the one who in midcareer came back and spent five years in the United States. These texts were written in English and, except for a short story that was published in *The University of Virginia Magazine* while he was still an undergraduate at Charlottesville, consist for the most part of lectures he gave, usually in academic settings, during the war years. There are also three short pieces published in *Commonweal* at the time. Since the editorial policy of the editors of Green's complete works in the *Oeuvres complètes* published by Gallimard's prestigious series called *Editions de la Pléiade* is to publish only those works written in French, these texts are hardly known in France, even to specialists.

They cover the subjects that interested him most at the time. Thus, diary-keeping, novel-writing, translation, and the Catholic tradition in French literature are given special attention. There are beautiful pages here on Charles Péguy's poetry in praise of Joan of Arc and the Virgin Mary (large portions of which Green was translating at the time). He also shows the extent to which the daily routine of the diary is essential to his fictional *oeuvre* and posits the power of linguistic structures over mind and inspiration by assuring us that an essay on the subject of France must of necessity go in quite different directions depending upon which language it is written in.

Green's intelligence, sense of humor, humility, and deep faith are all in evidence in this most interesting collection of essays. □

TOWARD A PUBLIC THEOLOGY

FULLNESS OF FAITH
The Public Significance of Theology
Michael J. Himes & Kenneth R. Himes, O.F.M.
Paulist Press, $14.95, 213 pp.

Joseph A. Komonchak

The Himes brothers should be congratulated for actually attempting what many authors have only suggested needs to be done: an articulation of "the social aspects of dogma" that Henri de Lubac urged over fifty years ago in *Catholicism*. Their book may be read at three levels. It is first an effort to show how the central symbols and doctrines of Catholic faith yield a vision of things that has public significance. Thus the Catholic doctrines of Original Sin, the Trinity, grace, the Incarnation, and the Communion of Saints are briefly discussed in successive chapters and shown to yield the "background theory" that informs classical Catholic social doctrine and suggests certain concrete policy choices. The purpose here, it would seem, is to demonstrate that the church's social ethic is in fact grounded more securely in the central faith than in the natural law or in "right reason." In this respect the brothers Himes are following a trend that has become dominant since Vatican II, in the social documents of Popes Paul VI and John Paul II, and in the pastoral letters of the U.S. bishops.

Second, their argument is at almost every point directed against three features of contemporary American public discussion: the privatized status of religion too often assumed by both believers and nonbelievers, the individualism that marks much public discourse, and the dominance of instrumental rationality over values and goals.

But third, the book argues that this task is best accomplished by the construction, not of a public *philosophy*, a consensus about basic meanings and values that might unite all participants in the public

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debate, believers and unbelievers alike, but of a public *theology*, a vision derived from basic religious convictions that is offered as the church's distinctive contribution to public debate. Stated in terms of representative figures, this is a choice of Reinhold Niebuhr's method over John Courtney Murray's. The book thus adds its support to a view of Murray's project that threatens to become a consensus: that Murray's appeal to natural law philosophy in order to generate the public consensus through which religious meanings and values could be publicly mediated was a mistake theologically (the remark was recently made that Murray had thereby "muzzled" his faith), strategically, and effectively.

These three purposes are at work simultaneously throughout the book. While most readers may have no difficulty in agreeing with the necessity of overcoming certain features of what passes for public discourse in contemporary America, some questions may arise with regard to the book's other two aims.

First, certain features of the effort to identify central Catholic doctrines and to explore the moral vision they imply are questionable. In most cases, the description of the doctrine is very rapid, while the unfolding of the moral norms and possible public policy implications takes up three-quarters of the chapters.

Second, in part because it is so rapid, the presentation of the doctrines at times

"As if Sunday isn't enough, he now wants us to introduce religion into our everyday life."

leaves much to be desired. To cite a basic example: on Original Sin the authors contrast to the classic Protestant view of the utter corruption of human nature with the Catholic view that the image of the Trinity is not destroyed. On this they build an argument against the liberal "myth of self-interest" that they think was the secularized anthropology Hobbes and Smith derived from the Protestant view. The next chapter shows how the trinitarian image yields a view of persons as made for communion and a notion of rights that relates people to one another rather than setting them over and against one another. But so great is the reaction to the Protestant view of corrupt human nature that the reality of sin, original or personal, hardly ever appears in the subsequent chapters. One suspects that Niebuhr's gratitude for the choice of his method would not extend to its application here; one would expect to hear from him something about the *theologia gloriae*. Perhaps he might also wonder at the absence from the book of the doctrine of redemption by the cross and Resurrection.

Another, not unrelated example: from the doctrine of grace the authors derive an argument in support of the consistent ethic of life that Cardinal Joseph Bernardin offered a few years ago. Here the key is the rejection of the two-storied image of nature and grace in favor of the idea that everything is grace. This idea, however, is presented in such a way as to suggest that the very distinction (I do not say "separation") of nature and grace is in danger of being lost (cf. the description of baptism as the celebration of the sacredness of physical life or the startling affirmation that "a person does not require a second religious 'rebirth' to be ushered into the world of grace"). Two things are worrisome here: the absence in the book of any serious discussion of the need for conversion, and the abandonment of the notion of nature that was developed in the Catholic tradition in order to measure the sinfulness of sin and the graciousness of grace.

The neglect of this notion of nature is pertinent to the other aim of the book: to provide a properly *theological* rather than merely philosophical mediation of the faith to public life. The authors make it clear from the beginning that they respect "the legitimate autonomy of other social institutions" that secularization has properly brought about. Their argument is at the level of cultural debate and proceeds by persuasion not coercion. The faith does not yield immediate policy decisions; those have to be argued for on the basis of a mediating social ethic. In fact, as noted above, the larger part of each chapter is devoted to this mediation.

But this very fact leads one to wonder whether the authors' project in the end really differs that much from what Murray attempted. Like Murray, they mediate the public significance of faith through a social ethic. Unlike Murray, they do not spend much time explaining where they found that ethic, despite the fact that it often appears to be at least as important to their arguments as the generating of religious meanings and values. In some cases, as for abortion, the key insight is even said to rest "upon moral reasoning, not appeals to faith." Similarly, the communitarian orientation of Catholic social teaching is articulated through concepts of person and community, of the common good, of human rights, etc., that in fact did not have an exclusively or even primarily religious origin, that can be debated on strictly philosophical grounds, and that need to be argued for rather than simply stated. This is particularly important when other Catholics, engaged in a similar effort to show the public significance of the faith (Michael Novak and Richard John Neuhaus, for example), think other concepts both more reflective of the faith and truer to experience.

If they were to undertake such an ar-

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gument the authors might find themselves in the same arena and forced to undertake a project much more similar to Murray's than they seem to imagine. I do not believe that Murray was as ignorant or uncaring about the properly doctrinal bases of his own position as the authors, following several other commentators, suggest. But he was acutely aware of the danger of the Balkanization of the public arena that can follow from appeals to distinctively religious warrants and of the need to achieve a substantive social consensus. Whether such a consensus is possible or even desirable is at the heart of contemporary discussions; Stuart Hampshire, for example, in his review of John Rawls's *Political Liberalism* (*The New York Review of Books*, August 12, 1993), argues that the necessary consensus is not substantive but only procedural. I suspect that the authors on this point are much closer to Murray than to Hampshire and I would be interested to know how they might engage the question effectively.

The enterprise the brothers Himes set themselves can only be welcomed, and I hope that they will be able to see in my substantive and methodological questions an appropriate response to their call for properly theological debate that is at once adequate to the faith and pertinent to our society. □

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 2)

be responsible even if it costs, even if no one else knows, to be compassionate and kind even to those who cannot reward us, to do justice to the powerful and the weak, to continue to love and to do good in a world of dishonesty, self-interest, and cynicism.

The making of these choices and the doing of these acts not only make life meaningful, but in a sense they transcend even death itself, opening up another dimension of reality, hidden and mysterious, that is greater than life and swallows up death. For the values embodied in these acts, we are willing to die, if need be, because they are worth more than mere physical existence. That is why we honor the martyr of conscience, the soldier who dies to defend country or comrades, the just judge, the honest politician, the faithful husband and wife, the caring doctor, the dedicated teacher, the holy preacher.

Death is a terrible event in our lives, an awesome, feared unknown whose mystery can be fully penetrated only by faith. (Saint Francis spoke of, and to, "Sister Death.") Yet, as Callahan has shown, reflection can bring light to this darkness. We can see that our being is bound by time from birth to death, and that death gives meaning to the in-between, to this interval page. It calls us to choose, while we still can, to become what we will be. It is death alone that makes human life serious, makes living worthwhile.

PETER J. RIGA

Dying a high-tech death

Pittsburgh, Pa.

To the Editors: Geraldine Gorman's article on her father's death ["My Father's Left Hand," July 16] reports, unfortunately, a typical experience in American hospitals today. The story reflects the existence both in the medical profession and in the larger society of a bias toward prolonging life without consideration of the costs, either in economic terms or in terms of human suffering, quality of life, the loss of dignity in dying a "high-tech death," and the effects on relationships and community.

Every treatment must be evaluated in light of its costs and risks as well as its presumed benefit. Yet families and patients usually choose to "do everything" to prolong life, without considering the burdens that may follow. The medical profession has to do a better job of informing patients and families about these potential burdens.

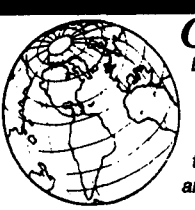
For too long, modern medicine has treated death as only a medical or technical problem, shunting aside its religious and philosophical meanings. Our healthcare system "hides" the sick and elderly in hospitals and other facilities away from the not-yet-dying, thereby robbing generations of any opportunity to struggle through the meaning of illness, suffering, and death. Because our society stresses individual autonomy and independence as the most important values of personhood, it views death as utter defeat. Because the dying process involves dependency, burdensomeness, passivity, loss of physical beauty—all of them disvalued in the present social context—we see death itself as inherently undignified. It's no wonder patients and families often disregard the burdens of treatment.

The time has come for patients and doctors to deal with death as a natural part of life. Both health professionals and the public should once more come to see dying "a gentle death in one's own home" as an ending to be hoped for rather than shunned. RALPH A. CAPONE, M.D.

Taxes & conscience

Kansas City, Mo.

To the Editors: Your editorial "Health Reform at Risk" [July 16] makes a cogent case for excluding abortion from the package of tax-financed benefits to be included in any health reform package. At one point you say you are "convinced that there is more to be said about requiring all of



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us through our taxes to pay for abortions."

Before you and Henry Hyde take the moral high ground here, I suggest you take a second to consider the case of Bill Ramsey of Saint Louis. On July 16 he was sentenced by a federal court in his home town to thirty days' imprisonment and one year supervised release. His crime: refusing to pay federal income taxes as a matter of conscience. He has refused to pay war-taxes since 1972. This is at least his second conviction for refusing to be an accomplice in a nuclear holocaust.

The political Right and Center in this country have argued successfully for years that the social contract binding this country together has no room for selective opting-out, i.e., refusing to pay for holding the world a nuclear hostage. I can only hope that this newfound emphasis on the primacy of conscience will some day be applied to life after birth.

RICHARD BRUMMEL

The editors reply:

We are not entirely sure that the high moral ground lies in tax resistance. We much prefer the clearly constitutional route taken by Mr. Hyde, legislating to exclude the use of tax funds for abortion—a policy that we hope will continue with any health-care legislation.

Mr. Brummel may remember that conscience was given its voice during the Vietnam War, when even some on the Right and in the Center withheld various taxes imposed to help pay for it—including a telephone tax.

Decriminalize? No!

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: Out of experience gained in eleven years in my present position, I wish to enter a respectful dissent to Peter Riga's article urging decriminalization of drugs ["The Drug War Is a Crime," July 16].

I speak to approximately 2,500 former drug users a year, both inmates in state prisons and those on parole. Asked about decriminalization, they overwhelmingly (about 98 percent) respond negatively. Obviously, some of them may be telling the authority figure putting the question what they believe he wants to hear. But in most cases one cannot miss the depth of their emotion and the substance of their convictions.

In summary, they think of addiction as "a monkey on my back"; they believe they cannot hope to lead a life of meaning and purpose while addicted. They further maintain that when using drugs they are "different people," because they engage in behavior they would never consider while "normal": beating their spouses and children, sleeping for long periods, finding themselves unable to do even simple tasks. And they admit that while "on" drugs they commit many crimes to get money to buy more drugs.

Mr. Riga is obviously a person of good will; indeed he appears to be on the front lines of this struggle. He should realize, however, that others who have proposed his (admittedly partial) solution to the drug problem have been accused of advocating a form of social genocide. The charge comes from responsible people living and working in ghetto communities—ministers, priests, teachers, social workers. At best, they hold, decriminalization as a "cure" for drug use by those trapped in the ghetto would turn criminals into zombies, while increasing the number of drug abusers.

Finally, Mr. Riga and those who agree with him should consider how their program would be implemented. Who would be eligible? Anyone who requests it? Any age? Only serious addicts? Would the poor receive drugs free? A sliding scale? Would crack be available? PCPs? LSD? If not, why not? If the experiment failed, could we recriminalize drugs? If the fundamental problem is not so much drug use as the conditions that encourage it, as Mr. Riga appears to believe, is his solution an effort to solve the problem "on the cheap"? These are questions that demand to be explored if we are to consider decriminalization.

JOSEPH MULHOLLAND

The writer is commissioner of the board of parole, State of New York.

'Inclusive' can work

Rochester, N.Y.

To the Editors: I couldn't agree more with Raymond A. Schroth's criticisms ["Let's Go to the Text," August 13] of the lectionary published by Priests for Equality. The first sample I saw, years ago, was enough to turn me off to this enterprise. Colossians 3:18-19 was rendered "You who are in relationships, be submissive to each other... Lovers, love each other."

But Schroth's article, perhaps unintentionally, gives the mistaken impression that all inclusive-language lectionaries are, and must be, of this poor quality. On the contrary, the "Criteria for the Evaluation of Inclusive Language," issued in 1990 by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, proscribes the kinds of absurdity that Schroth points to in the Priests for Equality text. The bishops state, for instance, that "in narrative and parables the sex of individual persons should be retained." And they make clear that, in general, "the church expects for its translations not only accuracy but facility and beauty of expression."

I'm confident that the inclusive-language lectionary currently being prepared by the NCCB will give us a text that is both theologically sound and esthetically pleasing. Meanwhile, we have the New Revised Standard Version, based on the same theological and linguistic principles as the bishops' "Criteria" and already approved by them for liturgical use.

PEGGY ROSENTHAL

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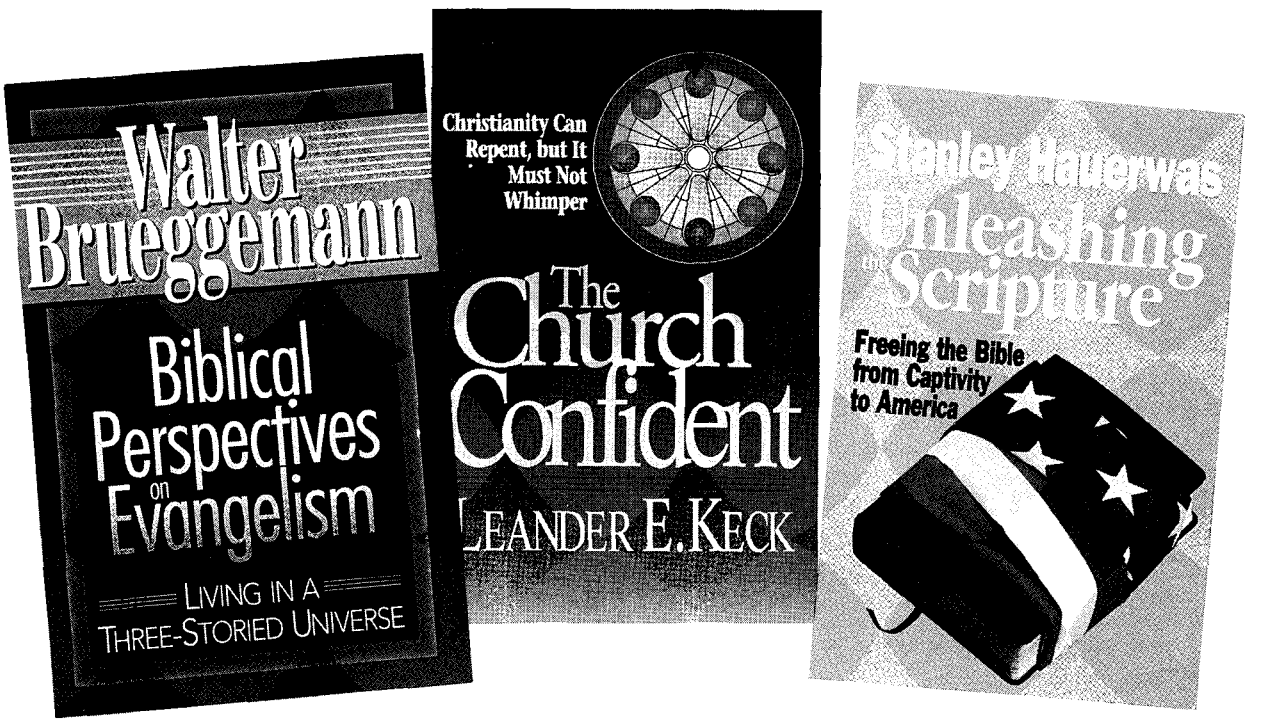
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